Questions on Christian Topics

Second Edition.

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Carl Manthey-Zorn.

Gift by
Paul J. Slavik

Questions on Christian Topics

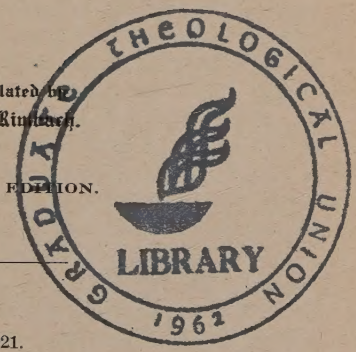
Answered from the Word of God

by

Carl Manthey-Zorn.

Translated by
J. A. Kinderich.

SECOND EDITION.



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Foreword.

From time to time, especially in recent years, Christians have asked me questions and desired me to answer them; have suggested topics and requested me to discuss them; not by way of private correspondence but in public print, for the benefit of the Christian public. In one case the following caution was added: "But I don't want your opinion on these matters, neither do I want the opinion of other theologians; I want you to tell us what the **Word of God** says, and that plainly, definitely and incontestably." This demand is altogether proper. Well, the submitting of these questions and topics was what prompted me to write this book and the above-stated caution, I trust to God, has guided me in doing so.

Clergymen have been especially desirous of having the **distinctive doctrines** of all the different churches and synods and all questions relating to **marriage,** especially the sins committed against the marriage relation, presented briefly and pointedly, and of having the several treatises published severally in pamphlet form. A very urgent request was made that a treatise on the intelligibility of the **Revelation of St. John,** together with an exposition of the book, in outline, be published in some church paper or periodical. As for the "distinctive doctrines" and the "questions relating to marriage," I at first hesitated to accede to this request, because the former are already set forth very nicely in the well known book of **T. Joh. Grosse,** and the latter, so I am told, are treated in some printed Proceedings, etc., and have been published under separate cover. But finally, on careful weighing the reasons advanced, I decided to discuss these topics. I did not, however arrange the several treatises for publication im pam-

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phlet form, but embodied them in this book as Chapters III and XII. Should any one still desire these things in separate pamphlets, he will have to make arrangements with the publisher. The Revelation of St. John is treated in Chapter XXVI.

Some few chapters may seem to have been written exclusively for pastors. But this is not the case by any means. Every church member ought to know what his pastor's duties are. Pastors do not soar above their churches, they are their churches' ministers, their servants. It is their duty to serve their churches with the Word of God and according to the Word of God, and they must be willing to give account to them of their ministry.

I have prepared a complete index, which will enable any one to find with ease what he may chance to be looking for.

If any one be dissatisfied with any of the answers I have given to these questions, let him convict me of error by **the Word of God.** All else will be of no avail.

C. M. Z.

East Cleveland, Ohio, 1913.

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I. The Bible.

1. What is the Bble?

The Bible is the Word of God. God speaks to us in the Bible. In the Old Testament He speaks to us through the Prophets, and in the New Testament through the Evangelists and Apostles; for these men wrote as they were moved and inspired by the Holy Ghost. God gave us the Bible to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

The Apostle Peter says of the writers of the Old Testament, and of their writings: "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." II Pet. 1: 21. And the Apostle Paul writes, referring to the Old Testament: "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." II Thess. 3: 15-17. And the same Apostle says of himself and of the other Apostles and Evangelists and writers of the New Testament: "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." I Cor. 2: 13.

2. Is every word of the Bible, without exception, given by inspiration of God?

Yes, most assuredly. I Cor. 2: 13. St. Paul says as much. And the Lord Jesus quotes from the Old Testament a word of little consequence, it seems,

and then proceeds: "And the Scripture cannot be broken.' John 10:35.

3. **But this testimony for the Bible is found only in the Bible itself. Now, how can we know for certain that it is true and that the Bible is indeed the Word of God?**

To this question we reply:

A. Prophecies of the Bible dealing with times which then were far away and yet to come have been promptly and literally fulfilled. Search the Bible and you will find that this is so. Now, how could this thing be, if the Bible were not the Word of God?

B. In all its teachings, the Bible is altogether God-like and holy. Human wisdom has never brought forth, nor indeed, can it bring forth, any such thing. Read and be convinced. How could such a book speak lies and practice deceit?

C. The Holy Spirit, Himself, through the Bible, bears witness with our spirit and persuades us that the Bible's teachings are God's truth. Give yourself up to the Bible and experience this thing. In this manner you will also be assured that the Bible's testimony for itself is truth, that the Bible is indeed the Word of God.

Thus it is that the Bible is the sole guide and rule in all things pertaining to the faith and life of Christians.

II. The True and the False Religion.

1. Which is the true religion?

The only true religion is the one that teaches that we sinners are justified in the sight of God and saved, not by works of the Law which we do, but alone by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Paul, the Apostle, writes: "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the Law: for by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified." Gal. 2: 16. And John the Baptist, pointing to Jesus, cried by the Holy Ghost: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1: 29. And St. Paul writes furthermore: "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." II Cor. 5: 21. And he writes: "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph. 2: 8-10. And he writes: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Rom. 3: 28.

2. Which is the false religion?

Each and every religion that teaches that we sinners are justified in the sight of God and saved,

either in whole or in part, by the words of the Law that we perform.

The Apostle Paul writes: "As many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them. But that no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith." Gal. 3: 10-11; Hab. 2: 4.

In a sense there are many religions in this world. But, strictly speaking, in reality there are but two: the true religion, of faith in Jesus Christ; and the false religion of righteousness by works. For, with the single exception of the Christian religion, all these religions teach with one accord—much as they may differ in other respects—that a man must be justified in the sight of God, and be saved, by his own works.

Also all so-called Christian churches, both preachers and hearers, who, more or less openly, teach and believe that we are not justified and saved alone by faith in Jesus Christ, but also by the works of the Law which we do—these also have the false religion. For St. Paul writes: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." And: "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the Law; ye are fallen from grace." Gal. 1: 8-9; 5: 4. In name and appearance these people may be Christians, in certain points they may even teach and profess the Christian doctrine. But that does not alter matters in the least. They have and hold the false religion, they deny the very sum and substance of the Christian religion.

III. The Church.

1. By church we mean the Church in the proper and real sense of the word, the Church of God on earth. What, according to the Bible, is the Church?

The Church, in the proper and real sense of the word, is the communion, or congregation, of saints, all christendom, whom the Holy Ghost, through the Gospel, calls, gathers, enlightens, sanctifies, and keeps with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

The Church of God on earth is made up of such people only as are true believers in Jesus Christ. Only these and, indeed, all these, belong to the Church.

The Bible says that God gave Christ to be "the head over all things to the Church which is His body." Eph. 1: 22-23. Now, if Christ is the head of the Church and the Church is Christ's body, then the Church of God surely is all Christendom, and only true believers in Jesus Christ are members thereof. The Bible says that "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. 5: 25-27. Here you see that the Church of God is the communion of saints; that is, the congregation of them whom Christ has sanctified with His blood, which He shed for them, and which has been appropriated to them through the Gospel with the Holy Sacraments, so that in the sight of God they are utterly holy, and without sin. Now, this surely is a description of all Christendom, to which none

but true believers in Jesus Christ belong; for false Christians and hypocrites are not thus sanctified.

In like manner, the Bible calls the various congregations and church assemblies that are found in various places the temple of God and says that they belong to "all the building" and "holy temple in the Lord," that the Spirit of God dwells in them, that they are an habitation of God through the Spirit. St. Paul writes to the Church at Corinth: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." 1 Cor. 3: 16-17. And to the Church at Ephesus he writes: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Eph. 2: 19-22. And Christians are told in the Bible that they are come to the "general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." Heb. 12: 23-24. Here the Apostle surely speaks of such people only as are true believers in Jesus Christ and says that they belong to the Church of God.

Let this suffice to show that according to the Bible the Church of God on earth is the communion of saints; that is, all Christendom, whom the Holy Ghost, by the Gospel, calls, gathers, enlightens, sanctifies, and keeps with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

In this Church of God on earth no false Christian has

any part, no hypocrite, no wicked person. The Apostle Paul writes: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Rom. 8: 9. And St. John writes of the hypocrites, who finally sever even their outward connection with the Church and congregation: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." 1 John 2: 19. And the Lord Jesus says: "If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered." John 15:6.

2. Is the Church of God on earth a visible kingdom? Can we trace its boundaries or point out its members?

No. Not so. The Church of God on earth is a purely spiritual kingdom. Who its members are no one knows, save only the Lord. For what is it that makes a man a member of this kingdom? Is it not faith in Jesus Christ, genuine faith of the heart, which God alone perceives?

The Lord Jesus says: "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for behold, the Kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17: 21-22. The Apostle Peter writes to the scattered Christians: "Ye, also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. 2: 5. According to this, the Church is a spiritual building, not an external and visible one. Finally, St. Paul writes: "The Lord knoweth them that are His." 1 Tim. 2: 19. So it is the Lord who knows and acknowledges them who of a truth are His, who of a truth belong to His Church and Kingdom. And only they are His who have His Spirit and who have the true faith. Rom. 8: 9. Now, who

can tell whether a man have the Spirit of Christ, who, indeed, but the Lord?

So the Church of God on earth is not a visible kingdom. We cannot trace its boundaries nor point out its members. It is a purely spiritual kingdom, whose extent and membership are known to God alone.

In the light of these few remarks, how arrogant is the claim of the Roman Catholic Church that she, and she alone, is the one holy Christian Church of God and that only they belong to God's Kingdom who have received and have her mark! Rev. 13: 16.

3. Nevertheless, we sometimes speak of a visible Church. What do we mean by that?

We mean all those who are gathered about God's Word and Sacraments, profess the Christian faith and call themselves Christians. These people, of course, are visible and their conduct is open to observation. But not all of these people are real Christians. There always are false Christians, hypocrites, and wicked people among them. And we call them church solely because of the true Church of God, which is the communion of saints and which lies hidden among them.

To all those flocks which had been gathered in various places through the preaching of the Gospel and which assembled about the Word of God and the Holy Sacraments, professed the Christian faith and called themselves Christians, to all these the Apostle applies the name of "Church" and "Church of God." I Cor. 1: 2; II Cor. 1: 1; Gal. 1: 2; I Thess. 1: 1; II Thess. 1: 1. And the Lord Jesus does the same thing in His message to the seven Churches of Asia Minor. Rev. 2: 3. Now, such Churches surely were visible. Consequently we do nothing amiss when in like manner we speak of a visible Church.

Furthermore, the Lord Jesus Christ tells us that in such visible Churches there always are beside the true believers a lot of false Christians, hypocrites, and wicked people. For He says: "The kingdom of heaven" (the Church of God on earth) "is like" (is similar in outward appearance) "unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Matth. 13: 47-50. Again He says: "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also." Matth. 13: 24-26. And the Lord interpreted these words as follows: "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil." Matth. 13: 37-39.

Thus it is, and thus it ever will be, in the visible Church on earth. Not until the end of the world will the wheat be separated from the chaff and the Church of God stand forth cleansed from all admixture, as you just read, Matth. 13, 48-50, and as you may read, v. 27-30 and 39-43.

Finally we said that the visible Church, which is thus mingled with hypocrites here on earth, was called "Church" solely for the sake of the true Church of God, which is the communion of saints, and which lies hidden within the visible Church. Now, that such is really the case we see from the fact that the Apostles, in their communications to the Churches, always address this true Church of God and have respect to her. For St. Paul

writes, "unto the Church of God which is at Corinth," to the entire visible Church congregated at that place; but he proceeds at once to say: "to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." I Cor. 1: 1-2. And such is invariably the custom, as you may see at the beginning of every Apostolic Epistle.

Since the heavenly seed, the Word of God, is sown in the visible Church, the Children of the Kingdom, the true believers, are sure to be found in the midst of her. For the Lord Jesus says: "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how." Mark 4: 26-27. And the Lord says: "As the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it." Isa. 55: 10-11.

4. Does the Church of God on earth, as it visibly appears, stand united, in all places and in all its various church bodies, in the pure doctrine of God's Word and in the right use of the holy Sacraments?

Ah, no, not by far! Touching numerous points of the Word of God, more numerous in some, less numerous in others, we find, in most places and in most church bodies, a false confession, false teaching, and a false use of the holy Sacraments. And such churches we call **unorthodox** churches.

5. Which Church would God have us adhere to?

To the **orthodox** Church; that is, to that Church whose confession is pure, and whose doctrine is pure, touching every point of the Word of God, and which administers the holy Sacraments according to Christ's institution.

The Lord Jesus says: "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Matth. 28: 19-20. And He says: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8: 31-32. And St. Paul, on declaring that the Word which he and his fellow-laborers proclaimed demonstrates its power at all times and in all places, proceeds to say: "For we are not as many, which corrupt the Word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ." II Cor. 2: 17. So God would have us adhere to that Church in which all things are taught whatsoever Christ has commanded; in which men continue in Christ's Word and know the truth; in which the Word of God is not corrupted, but is preached as of God and in the sight of God, in Christ: we should adhere to the orthodox Church.

6. What, according to God's will, should be our attitude toward the unorthodox Churches?

With great care we should beware of false prophets and therefore shun all Churches in which their ungodly and ruinous doctrine is proclaimed.

The Lord Jesus says: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." Matth. 7: 15. St. Paul, the Apostle, said to the elders of the Church at Ephesus: "For I know

this that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." Acts 20: 29-31. The same Apostle writes: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." Rom. 16: 17-18. And: "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself." Tit. 3: 10-11. St. John writes: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." II John 10:11. And St. Paul writes: "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Gal. 5: 9. He would say: One false doctrine will in time spoil the whole faith of the Church. And of that church which is ruled by Antichrist, the pope of Rome, the voice from heaven says: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not her plagues." Rev. 18:4.

7. **If, as has been shown, it is the will of God that we with great care beware of false teachers and therefore shun those Churches in which their ungodly and consequently ruinous doctrines are taught, may we harbor the thought that all those people who belong to unorthodox Churches are lost?**

Oh, no, not in the least! We, indeed, who have a true knowledge of the heavenly doctrine, we

would be lost if we were to adhere to an unorthodox church.

For in so doing we should be knowingly disobedient to God, deny the truth that we have known, and wilfully and wantonly encourage falsehood and error, and sin against conscience. True, we should reject false teachers and condemn their false teachings. **But we must not suppose that all they who belong to an unorthodox church are lost. On the contrary, we should be assured that also in unorthodox churches God has a holy congregation of such as truly believe in Jesus Christ.** For even in unorthodox churches, so they still be **Christian** churches, there is a remnant of the heavenly seed, the Word of God; and God Himself has promised that this seed shall come up and bear fruit; even in unorthodox churches there are believers, true believers and children of God and heirs of eternal life. Their adhering to a false church is due to ignorance; they do not know that the false doctrines that are taught them are contrary to the Word of God; they are not familiar with the true doctrines, or do not know them to be the truth; in simplicity of mind they cling, in spite of all the false doctrines they are taught, to the pith and marrow of the Gospel, to-wit: that a man is justified and saved, not by works of the Law that he does, but alone by grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, that is apprehended and made theirs by faith. And this very thing, when by the operation of the Holy Spirit it is grasped with an upright heart, this is what saves a man. For it is written: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law." Rom. 3: 28. And again: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Acts 16: 31. And again: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4: 12.

8. Which are the unorthodox churches that surround us?

We shall mention the principal ones and briefly state their character in the light of God's Word.

A. The Roman Catholic Church.

This church boasts that she was the first Church, the original Church of Jesus Christ, and that her greatness and glory are beyond compare. As far as outward appearance is concerned, she may boast these things if she will.

In her there sits enthroned as Most Holy Father, Master, and Lord, the Roman pontiff or pope. The pope pretends that his throne is the Apostolic See; that according to Christ's Word the Church of Christ is built upon Peter; that hence the pope, being Peter's successor, is the visible head of the Church and the vicegerent of Jesus Christ on earth and has the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; that he has the Holy Spirit and hence authority to unquestionably establish articles of faith and infallibly interpret the Holy Scriptures, and that all the world is in duty bound to obey him.

Now, this is a lump of blasphemous lies and a piece of antichristian arrogance! Shall I prove this statement by the Scriptures?

Christ says to His Apostles: "Be not ye called rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." Matth. 23: 8-12. What right has the pope, then, to sit in the Church of God as Most Holy Father and Master, and Lord? How can his throne be the Apostolic See?

Christ said to Peter: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matth. 16: 18. "Peter" means rock. But Christ did not say: Thou art the rock. Much less did He say: Thou art the rock upon which I will build My Church. But what did He say? How does the matter stand?

Let us see in all simplicity what the Bible tells us about this thing. The Bible says: "When Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked His disciples, saying Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matth. 16: 13-18. Because Simon had confessed the truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Lord Jesus called him Peter, which is Cephas in Hebrew and means rock, or man of rock. He had given Simon this name before. Matth. 10: 1-2, we read: "And when He had called unto Him His twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. Now, the names of the twelve Apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter." And Mark 3: 14-16: "And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sickness, and to cast out devils: and Simon He surnamed Peter." Then, after calling Simon by the name He had given him before, i. e., Peter, the Lord Jesus went on to

say: "And upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Here the Lord Jesus did not mean Peter, He meant God's eternal truth, which Peter had confessed, namely, that He, Jesus, is the Christ, the Son of the living God: upon **this** rock, upon Himself, He would build His Church and the gates of hell should not prevail against it. For this reason the Greek Bible—the New Testament was originally written in Greek—does not employ the word Peter in this connection; it employs another form of the word, which likewise means rock. No, the Lord Jesus did not build His Church upon Peter; He built it upon God's eternal truth that He, Jesus, is the Christ, the Son of the living God; He built the Church upon Himself. Thus we also read expressly: "Other foundations can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." I Cor. 3: 11. And Isaiah prophesies of Christ and says: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." Isa. 28: 16. And we have Jesus' own words for it that this prophecy refers to Him, as you see from Matth. 21: 42, and Mark 12: 10, and Luke 20: 17. And St. Peter himself declares that this prophecy relates to the Lord Jesus Christ. For he said, being filled with the Holy Ghost: "Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4: 8-12. And the same Apostle Peter

writes: "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even unto them which stumble at the word, being disobedient." I Pet. 2: 3-8. And St. Paul says the same thing when he writes: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." Rom. 10: 9-11.

Again I repeat: The Lord Jesus did not build His Church upon the man, Peter. Read on and see what Jesus said right after He had spoken the above words: "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee. But he turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou art an offence unto me; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Matth. 16: 21-23.

Furthermore, on calling him Peter, the Lord said to him: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall

be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Matth. 16: 19. Here the Lord certainly did mean Peter. Here he gave unto Peter the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. But these keys of the Kingdom of Heaven were not given to Peter alone. After His resurrection Christ gave these self-same keys unto all His disciples, when they were assembled and the doors were shut for fear of the Jews. Nor was this a meeting of the Apostles only. There were others present, both men and women, one hundred and twenty in all. To these He said: "Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained." John 20: 21-23. And we read that the Lord Jesus gave these self-same keys to the Kingdom of Heaven to the whole Church and to each and every part thereof wherever assembled. For He says: "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church, but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them." Matth. 18: 15-20.

How dare the pope pretend that according to Christ's Word the Church of Christ is built upon Peter; that he

being Peter's successor, is the visible head of the Church and the vicegerent of Christ on earth and has the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven—he, he, he alone? Indeed, where is it written that he is Peter's successor? It is not written in the Word of God. It is written in the word of one who cannot claim any kinship to God, as, indeed, are all the pope's pretensions.

As for the pope's pretension that he has the Holy Spirit and hence authority to unquestionably establish articles of faith and infallibly interpret the Holy Scriptures, you can gauge that at its true value without any further assistance. All you need do is bear in mind what you have just been reading. But how does the pope get his followers to allow these arrogant claims? He does it by means of trickery such as this: In his Catechism he teaches: The doctrine that shall be taught the faithful is contained in its entirety in the Word of God, which is divided into the Holy Scriptures and the traditions. (Cat. Rom. Provem. Qu. 12). So the pope counts oral traditions as being part and parcel of God's Word, declares that the Holy Scriptures are not sufficient to kindle and preserve saving faith, and forbids the people to read the Holy Scriptures, because, to them, he says, the Scriptures are obscure and misleading. Thus the poor, deluded people naturally look to the pope for instructions as to what they shall believe and as to how the Holy Scriptures shall be interpreted. But God says to the children of Israel by Moses: "Ye shall not add to the word that I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I conmmand you." Deut. 4: 2. And in Joshua He says: "Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left." Josh. 23: 6. And Paul, the Apostle, writes: "From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee

wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good work." II Tim. 3: 15-17. And St. John, the Apostle, writes. "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." John 20: 31. And the Lord Jesus says: "Search the scriptures." John 5: 39. Yes, and the Bereans are lauded as being more noble than the Thessalonians in that, when Paul preached the Gospel unto them, they "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." Acts 17: 11.

Finally, touching the pope's claim that all the world owes him obedience—the truth of the matter is this: We have already seen from the Word of God that God never made the pope the head of the Church. Now, how about civil government? How about the state? Christ says: "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's." Matth. 22: 21. Here Christ divorces Church and state, civil government and spiritual government. He decrees that the state shall not busy itself with the Church's affairs and that the Church, as such, shall not concern itself with the state's affairs. If the pope were a servant of Jesus Christ, he would follow Christ's instructions and not try to rule the state.

* * *

We cannot undertake, dear reader, to lead you clear through the maze of false doctrines that are taught in the popish Roman Catholic Church and refute these doctrines one by one by the Word of God. The space allotted us in this little book will not permit of such a thing.

But mark well what we now say: The popish Roman Catholic Church leaves intact the divine shell of the Christian religion. Loudly does she confess that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, that God is triune, that Jesus Christ is true God, that He was conceived and born in all holiness of the Virgin Mary, that He suffered and died and rose again, ascended into heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, that He will come again on the last day to judge the quick and the dead. She also speaks of the merit of Christ, by which we are benefited. **But she casts away the kernel enclosed in this shell: she rejects the Bible doctrine of Justification, that most precious doctrine that a lost and condemned sinner is justified in the sight of God, and saved, solely by grace through the merit of Christ, which is imputed to him, without the works of the Law that he does, alone by faith which trusts in such grace and favor of God.**

In the Council of Trent the popish Roman Catholic Church has decreed: "If any man saith that men are justified either by the sole imputation of the justice of Christ, or by the sole remission of sins to the exclusion of the grace and the charity which is poured forth in their hearts by the Holy Ghost and is inherent in them; or even that the grace whereby we are justified is only the favor of God: let him be anathema." (Sees. 6, Can. 11.) Furthermore: "If any one saith that justifying faith is nothing else but confidence in the divine mercy which remits sins for Christ's sake, or that this confidence alone is that whereby we are justified: let him be anathema." (Sees. 6, Can. 12.) The Roman catechism represents faith as mere assent and knowledge and says: "This knowledge is nothing else than faith, by virtue of which we hold that as fixed whatsoever the authority of our Holy Mother, the Church, teaches us to have been delivered by God." (I, 1, Qu. 1.)

Thus the same catechism also speaks of faith as of a

meritorious act of man. (I, 7, Qu. 7.) And it says: "Our good actions . . . merit the rewards of eternal glory . . . and satisfy for our sins." (II, 5, Qu. 67.)

The popish Roman Catholic Church does not regard Justification as an act whereby God, the supreme Judge, does graciously, for the sake of Christ's merit, which we have apprehended by faith, forgive us our sins and thus declare us righteous. And surely this is what Justification is, according to the Bible. But the popish Roman Catholic Church teaches that Justification is the grace and love of God which is shed abroad in the hearts of men whereby they advance from virtue to virtue and thus are increasingly justified, whereby they through their own works preserve and augment the justification, i. e., virtue infused into their hearts. The popish Roman Catholic Church says in the decrees of the Council of Trent: "Having, therefore, been thus justified and made the friends and domestics of God, advancing from virtue to virtue, they are renewed, as the Apostle says, day by day; that is, by mortifying the members of their own flesh and by presenting them as instruments of justice unto sanctification, they, through the observance of the commandments of God and the church, faith co-operating with good works, increase in that justice which they have received through the grace of Christ, and are still further justified." (Sess. 6, Can. 11.) And: "If any one saith that the justification received is not preserved and also increased before God through good works; but that the said works are merely fruits and signs of justification obtained, but not a cause of the increase thereof: let him be anathema." (Sees. 6, Can. 24.)

All that the Bible teaches concerning the justification of a poor sinner in the sight of God, concerning this innermost kernel of the only true, that is, of the Christian, religion, all this is not only rejected by the popish Roman Catholic Church, it is also accursed. By works, works,

works, and that by works which "our Mother, the Church," to-wit: the popish Roman Catholic Church, or, better still, the pope, has approved, we must be justified in the sight of God, we must merit salvation. And faith is merely an act whereby we know and give assent to the doctrine of the church. In other words, faith is obedient submission to the pope and thus a meritorious work.

But what does Chapter II of this book teach us? And what does it prove by the Word of God? It teaches and proves by the Word of God that the aforementioned teaching of the popish Roman Catholic Church is the sum and substance of all false religion. Read Chapter II once more. It isn't long.

Yes, indeed, despite all appearance, and all pretense, of Christianity, despite all other **Christian** doctrines that she teaches, the popish Roman Catholic Church has a false religion, nay, **the** false religion, the same false religion that the apostate Jews, who have rejected Christ, that the Mohammedans, and all the heathen, have, to-wit: the religion that a man is justified in the sight of God, and saved, by the works that he does.

Nay, more. Since the popish Roman Catholic Church not only teaches this false religion, but even—with a show, indeed, and under pretense, of Christianity and while confessing other Christian doctrines—rejects and curses the sum and substance of the true Christian religion, and that in the very face of the Bible, with which she is acquainted, and with great obstinacy and anger and hatred—in so doing this church stamps itself a more than unorthodox church, it stamps itself the church of Antichrist, the great Antichrist, whose coming was foretold in the Bible.

The pope of Rome is the Antichrist foretold and depicted in the Bible.

The holy Apostle Paul writes through the Holy Spirit to the Church at Thessalonica: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by

our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, that the day of Christ" (judgment day) "it as hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; **who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.** Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth (in a spiritual manner, at the time of the Reformation) and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." II Thess. 2: 1-12. Further prophecies concerning Antichrist you may read in the Book of Daniel, Ch. 11: 36-45, and in the Revelation of St. John, Chs. 10 to 19.

All the other false teachings of the popish Roman Catholic Church are but the outgrowth of her heathenish doctrine of justification and salvation by works and serve to uphold this doctrine.

We shall mention a few by way of example.

The popish Roman Catholic Church teaches:

Original sin is not the total depravity of our whole human nature, but merely a weakening of the free will,

which (free will) constitutes the image of God. By original sin man is merely deprived of that righteousness which Adam and Eve had above and beyond the image of God.

Christ merely atoned for original sin and bore the eternal punishment that we have deserved. For our actual sins we ourselves must atone, our temporal punishments we ourselves must bear, prior to death, here on earth, and after death, in purgatory.

Owing, however, to the works of supererogation, performed by saints now dead and by men of God still living (who are said to have performed more good works than are necessary for their own salvation) one can obtain more or less remission of temporal punishment according as he fulflls the conditions imposed by the pope.

For it is possible for men to render a perfect, yea, a supererogatory, fulfillment of the Law.

Through Baptism only original sin is washed away, and those actual sins which were committed prior to Baptism. Baptismal grace does not extend its saving influence over the whole of our lives.

Therefore the Lord casts out another safety plank, called repentance. And repentance is made up of three parts: 1, contrition, which is a meritorious work; 2, confession, i. e., auricular confession, before the priest; 3, satisfaction, the doing of such works of penance as "our Mother, the Church," prescribes through the priest. Hereupon absolution, or forgiveness, is granted.

Prayer is likewise a meritorious work. We should pray for the living and for the dead. And we should not only call upon the Triune God, but upon the angels also, and upon departed saints, especially upon the holy virgin Mary, who was conceived without sin (immaculate conception), and who is ascended into heaven. Images and relics should also be worshiped.

Celibacy (state of being unmarried) and the estate of monks and nuns is eminently meritorious.

In the Lord's Supper the priest, by consecrating them, changes the bread and wine into Christ's body and blood. To the laity only the consecrated host or wafer is given. But this is not all the sacrament stands for. The consecrated wafer, being changed into Christ's body, is to be worshipped and offered to God again and again as an unbloody sacrifice for the sins of the living and of the dead, for which, you remember, Christ's one offering on the cross has not rendered full satisfaction. This is what they call the Mass. To desire Mass and have it read is a meritorious work.

These and other false doctrines the popish Roman Catholic Church not only proclaims, contrary to the plain teachings of Holy Writ, but, as it proclaims each doctrine, it hurls a curse at all those who teach as the Bible does.

Antichristian papacy is the last and most perfect exhibition of diabolical cunning, devised for the purpose of beguiling Christians from the simplicity of the true faith and of ruining the Church of Christ. May God graciously open our eyes to see that this is so and may He fill us with a holy hatred for Antichrist, the pope of Rome. The poor, deluded masses, may God convert them for Jesus' sake!

B. The Greek Catholic Church.

This church is not a particle better than the Roman Catholic Church and is perfectly at one with her in almost every respect, especially in the heathenish doctrine of salvation by works. Only she does not acknowledge the pope of Rome as the head of the Church, but has her own church government. The Lord's Supper she administers under both kinds, giving the laymen both the bread and the wine; but she also administers it to little children. Her priests are allowed to marry. She has one false doctrine more than has the Roman Catholic Church: she says that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father only, not from the Son.

C. The Reformed Church.

This church was founded at the time of the Reformation. Hence its name. **Zwingli** and **Calvin** are its spiritual fathers. These men, above others, introduced the false doctrines which separate this communion from the orthodox Church.

However, the Reformed Church is not a single denomination, but is divided into different church bodies, which go by different names. Thus beside that church body which still calls itself the **Reformed Church**, we find the **Episcopal Church**, the **Presbyterians**, the **Congregationalists**, the **Methodists**, the **Baptists**, and many other sects. In their most conspicuous false doctrines these churches are all one and agreed. They differ only in certain particulars, which, for the greater part, are of minor importance.

We shall first point out to you those false doctrines which all of these churches confess in common. Then we shall speak of certain special false doctrines that are confessed by some of these denominations without being the common property of all.

In their public Confessions these churches one and all declare, and that in no uncertain terms, that the Bible is the Word of God. But in reality—such has been their custom from the beginning down to the present time—they are all guided by the pernicious principle that in interpreting the Bible one must consult **human reason.** Calvin very frankly says in the Geneva Catechism: "Can you not demonstrate from reason that there is no incongruity here?" (= nothing unreasonable.) "Yes, if you will concede that the Lord has instituted nothing that is incompatible with (contrary to) reason." (Page 163.) And Zwingli, in his Exposition of the Christian Faith, promises not to "neglect the philosophical (method of) demonstration (which demonstrates) by means of logical inference" (i. e., by a process of reasoning). (Page 46.)

The holy Apostles, in warning against every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, "bring into captivity every thought unto the obedience of Christ." II Cor. 10: 5. And St. Paul writes: "We know (the things of God revealed to us in the Bible) in part and we prophesy (preach, teach) in part." And: "Now we see through a glass (in a mirror) darkly (in a riddle)." I Cor. 13: 9-12. How, then, can reason counsel us with respect to the things of God revealed to us in the Bible: No, indeed! We must simply hear, believe, and repeat what the Bible, the Word of God, says.

But the Reformed church bodies, in speaking of that most holy of holies, **the person of our Lord Jesus Christ,** are not governed solely and entirely by the Word of God, but avowedly follow the maxim which they themselves have coined and which evidently was dictated by human reason, namely: "The finite cannot receive the infinite." And thus they deny that to the human nature of Christ divine attributes are communicated, for instance, omnipresence. They say: "That to each of the two natures the essential attributes of the other nature are communicated we most emphatically deny." (Neustadter Admon., p. 70.) They say: "By no means do we teach that Christ according to His human nature is still in this world and therefore omnipresent." (Helv. Conf. XI, page 485. Ed. Niem.) They say: "According to His human nature He is now not upon earth." (Heidelb. Cat., Qu. 47.)

But what do we read in the Bible? Standing before Nicodemus in His state of humiliation, Jesus Christ said to Nicodemus: "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the **Son of Man which is in heaven.**" John 3: 13. And standing bodily before His disciples, the risen and exalted Savior said: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," and: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Mt. 28: 18-20.) The holy Apostle Paul writes

concerning Jesus Christ: "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might **fill all things.**" Eph. 4: 10. It was just according to His human nature, surely, that Christ ascended up. Hence it is not only according to His divine nature, but also according to His human nature that he fills all things and is with us alway.

Now, whom are we to believe: human reason and philosophy, as we find it in the Reformed Church, or the Word of God?

Pre-eminent among those false doctrines which all Reformed Churches teach in unison is their doctrine concerning **the Means of Grace.**

The Means of Grace, you know, are the Word of Christ and the Holy Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Let us first recall the **true** doctrine of the Means of Grace.

It is this: The Savior, Jesus Christ, with all His salvation and with His Holy Spirit, who works faith in our hearts, is given through the Means of Grace, thus alone.

The **Word** of Christ is not a mere tidings of Christ and His salvation. It is a means whereby God, as by a divine instrument, gives us Christ and His salvation. And the Holy Spirit lives and moves in this Word, comes to us with this Word, and by it works faith in our hearts. St. Paul fitly calls the salvation in Christ "the righteousness which is of faith," introduces it is a person speaking, and writes thus: "But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above): Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from

the dead, thou shalt be saved." Rom. 10: 6-9. So Christ and His salvation is given us through the Word and is near us in the Word and is ours, if we believe the Word. And Christ says: "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." John 6: 63. So Christ's Word is all Holy Spirit and all life. Hence the Apostle says of the Gospel: "It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Rom. 1: 16. And St. Peter writes to the Christians: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." I Peter 1: 23. So by the Word of God which liveth and which is powerful through the Holy Spirit, we Christians were born again, were made believers.

Baptism is not a mere sign, or token, of the salvation given us in Christ, but a means whereby God as by a seal affixed to the divine instrument, gives us Christ and His salvation. And by means of Baptism God also sheds His Holy Spirit on us, who works faith in our hearts. St. Paul writes: "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Gal. 3: 27. And St. Peter says: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2: 38. And Ananias said, at Jesus' behest, to penitent Saul: "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." Acts 22: 16. And this very same Apostle Paul writes: "But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Tit. 3: 4-7. So God, through Baptism, gives us Christ and for-

giveness of sins and salvation and the Holy Ghost, who regenerates and renews us, so that by faith we are justified in the sight of God and made heirs of eternal life, or, as our Catechism says: "It (Baptism) works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare."

The **Lord's Supper** is not a mere token of the salvation given us in Christ, but a means whereby Christ, as by a sacred pledge which He has joined to His Word, gives unto us Himself and His salvation. And this sacred pledge is His body given into death for us and His blood, which He shed for us; which body and blood He, in, with, and under the consecrated bread and wine, gives us to eat and to drink orally and in all reality, yet in a manner that we cannot comprehend. And verily, through the Lord's Supper He also gives us His Holy Spirit, who kindles faith in our hearts, so that in the Lord's Supper we are not only nourished unto one body, but are also made to drink into one Spirit. When instituting the Lord's Supper, "Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Matth. 26: 26-28. Compare Mark 14: 22-24; Luke 22: 19-20; I Cor. 11: 23-25. So with the consecrated bread, Christ gives us His body, given into death for us, and with the consecrated wine, or cup, He gives us His blood, which is shed for us; and gives it to us for the remission of sins. And where there is remission of sins, there is also life and salvation. And St. Paul writes: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are

all partakers of that one bread." And: "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." I Cor. 10: 16-17; I Cor. 12: 13. So the Holy Spirit also comes to us through the Lord's Supper and kindles faith in us and strengthens it, so that we Christians are nourished unto one spiritual body and made to drink into one Spirit; and this one spiritual body is the body of Christ the true Church, and this one Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of true faith. Our Catechism says: "What is the Sacrament of the Altar? It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine for us Christians to eat and to drink, instituted by Christ himself." "What is the benefit of such eating and drinking? That is shown us by these words, 'Given and shed for you for the remission of sins, namely, that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sin, life and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sin, there is also life and salvation."

This is God's true Bible doctrine of the Means of Grace: of the Word, of Baptism, and of the Lord's Supper.

And this doctrine the Reformed Church, together with all the church bodies allied to her, most emphatically denies. She divorces Grace from the Means of Grace. She calls the Means of Grace mere external words and tokens of God's grace. She denies that in the Means of Grace Christ and His salvation, together with His Holy Spirit, are contained and are thereby conveyed and given to us. She imagines that Christ and His salvation and His Holy Spirit, who kindles faith in us, must be obtained from God without any means. This, as you have seen, is contrary to the Bible. Yes, this is antibiblical enthusiasm [1] and

[1] Enthusiasm is the imagination that one is in **direct** communication with God and His Holy Spirit.

begets, and indeed has begotten, wild and ever wilder enthusiasm.

Speaking of the **Word** and the preaching thereof, Zwingli says: "We see that among all nations the external preaching of the Apostles and Evangelists or bishops has preceded faith, though we are indebted for faith to the Holy Ghost **alone.**" (Fid. Rat. 10 Ed. Niem., p. 52.) So, according to this, we do not receive faith through the preaching of the Word, but we receive it from the Holy Ghost alone, i. e., immediately. And of the **Sacraments** he says: "I believe, yea, I know, that all sacraments are so far from conferring grace, that they do not even bring it nearer." And: "We have never read in the Scriptures that sensual things, such as the sacraments are, convey the Holy Ghost." (Ibid., p. 25.) Calvin's Geneva Catechism says: "What is a sacrament? An external testimony of God's benevolence toward us, which, by means of a visible sign, **symbolizes** spiritual graces, to seal the promises of God in our hearts, that the truth of God may be the better established." (Ed. Niem., p. 160.) The Heidelberg Catechism speaks of the Sacraments thus: "They are visible holy signs and seals appointed of God for this end, that by the use thereof He may the more fully declare and seal to us the promises of the Gospel." (Qu. 66.)

Accordingly the Heidelberg Catechism says of **Baptism:** "Is the external washing (of the body) with water the washing away of sin itself? No. For only the blood of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit cleanse us from all sin." (Qu. 72.) And Calvin's Geneva Catechism says: "What is the signification of Baptism? It is two-fold. For by it the forgiveness of sins and also regeneration are **typified.**" (Qu. 162.) Zwingli writes: "Baptism is simply a means of designating them that are numbered with the church; by no means does Baptism take away sin." (Epist I, pp. 60, 61.) The Episcopal Church says in its Articles of Religion: "Baptism is not only a sign of profession and

mark of difference whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a **sign** of regeneration." Art. 27.)

Of the **Lord's Supper** Zwingli writes: "We deny that Christ's natural body itself is present in the Lord's Supper or is received orally." (Conf. of 1530, p. 26.) In defense of this denial the Heidelberg Catechism states what we have heard before, namely, that Christ's body is in heaven and we are on earth." (Qu. 76.) And the Episcopal Church says: "The natural body and blood of Christ our Savior are in heaven and not here, since it is contrary to the realness of the natural body of Christ to be in more than one place at one time." (Book of Common Prayer. Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper. English Edition.) The Reformed Church says: "Those who insist that these solemn words concerning the Lord's Supper: 'This is my body, this is my blood,' be taken in the literal sense, as they call it, we reject as false interpreters. For we maintain it is out of question that they must be taken figuratively, so that the word: 'bread and wine is' is equivalent to **'signifies.'**" (Cons. Tig. XXII, Ed. Niem, p. 196.)

That the Reformedists teach in all their various church bodies that the Lord's Supper does **not** impart any grace, does **not** confer Christ and His salvation and His Holy Spirit, we need not prove to you. You will find this self-evident if you will read once more what they say concerning the Sacraments. To them the Lord's Supper is nothing but a sacred sign and token of remembrance, for believing Christians, of the salvation that is given them in Christ.

What do you think of such a doctrine of the Means of Grace—the Word, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper—after being reminded of the Bible doctrine of the Means of Grace?

After all that we have said, we hardly need mention that all Reformed church bodies teach falsely concerning the **Office of the Keys** and concerning holy **Absolution** which follows Confession, i. e., concerning the remission of sins spoken by the Christian congregation through the called ministers of the Word.

The doctrine of the Bible on this subject you already know from the Catechism. The Office of the Keys "is the peculiar church power which Christ has given to His Church on earth to forgive the sins of penitent sinners unto them, but to retain the sins of the impenitent, as long as they do not repent." "Confession embraces two parts: one is that we confess our sins; the other, that we receive absolution or forgiveness from the confessor, as from God Himself, and in no wise doubt, but firmly believe, that by it our sins are forgiven before God in heaven." This doctrine is based upon the words of Christ where He says to His disciples: "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." And again: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained." John 20: 22-23. And St. Paul writes to the Church at Corinth: "If I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ." II Cor. 2: 10.

But the Reformed church bodies teach—so we read in the Second Helvetic Confession: The called ministers of Christ "use the keys when they **persuade** to faith and repentance." (14th Ed. Niem., p. 492.) And Zwingli writes: "To him that believes Christ sins are forgiven. As, therefore, no one knows of another whether he believe, so no one knows whether any one's sins be forgiven him, save him alone who has through the light and power of faith been assured of (his) forgiveness. Frivolous, therefore,

does all this seem: I absolve thee, and: I assure thee that thy sins be forgiven thee." (Expos. Chr. Fid. 95. Ed. Niem., p. 56.)

Mark well, dear reader: The Reformed church bodies will not understand that God **first** gives us the forgiveness of sins and all the salvation that is in Christ and that we must **thereupon** believe and accept it. Indeed, how can we accept it by faith, except God, in His grace, have first given it to us through His Word and Sacrament?

Concerning **Sunday,** false doctrine is taught especially by the Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, Baptists, and other Reformed sects. If we see what the Presbyterians teach we shall know what they all teach. In the Presbyterian Confession of Faith it says: "God, in His Word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment binding all men in all ages, hath particularly appointed one day in seven for a Sabbath to be kept holy unto Him: which from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ was the last day of the week; and from the resurrection of Christ was changed into the first day of the week, which in Scripture is called the Lord's Day and is to be continued to the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath." (Ch. XXI, 7.) The Seventh Day Baptists, Seventh Day Adventists, and certain others go beyond this and say that by all means the seventh day of the week, that is, Saturday, is to be observed as the Sabbath.

But God's Word says: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." Col. 2: 16-17.

The Sabbath law of the Old Testament was one of the shadows and types of Christ and has reached its fulfillment and come to an end in Him. The entire life of a Christian is to be a perpetual spiritual Sabbath. Who is able to grasp this? God's Word and Holy Spirit teaches us to

grasp it. Therefore we should keep the Word of God holy, gladly hear and learn it. Also the preaching of God's Word in public worship. This is God's gracious will. And **we** should freely, yet with a heartfelt longing, choose and set aside certain days and hours for such public worship. And from the very beginning the Church of Jesus Christ has chosen the Sunday of each week. And we gladly abide by this choice.

Our Confession says: "They err greatly that think that by the authority of the church the observation of the Lord's day has been instituted instead of the sabbath, as necessary. The Scripture has abrogated the sabbath, and teaches that all Mosaical ceremonies may be omitted, after the Gospel is revealed. And yet, because it was necessary to appoint a certain day, in order that the people might know when they ought to come together, it appears that the church for that purpose appointed the Lord's day: which for this cause also seems to have been preferred, that men might have an example of Christian liberty, and might know that the observation neither of the sabbath nor of another day is necessary." (Art. 28, Decorah Ed.)

Now we wish to speak of a number of special false doctrines that are taught by Reformed church bodies without being the common property of them all.

Concerning **Election,** false doctrine is taught by the **Calvinistic Reformed Church,** the **Presbyterians,** and certain others.

The first-named church teaches thus: "For the manifestation of His glory God decreed: 1, to create man perfect; 2, to suffer him to fall; 3, to **have mercy upon some of the fallen** and hence to elect them, while suffering the rest to remain in their depravity and ordaining them to everlasting perdition. . . . The Bible represents the purpose of God to have mercy upon men, as pertaining, not to all men without any exception, but to the elect only, to the express exclusion of the reprobate, such as Esau,

whom God hated with eternal hatred." (Form. Cons. helv. IV. Ed. Niem., p. 731.) And: "If we are not ashamed of the Gospel we must confess what it plainly teaches, to-wit: that God, according to His eternal good pleasure, which is independent of any other cause, ordained some, because it pleased Him so to do, unto salvation, while others were rejected." (Cons. Genev. Ed. Niem., p. 224.)

In the Westminster Confession of the Presbyterian Church we read: "By the decree of God for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death." As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath He by the eternal and most free purpose of His will foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit, working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified and saved but the elect only." (Ch. III, par. 3, par. 6.)

A Christian cannot fail to see that this is a most horrible and wicked doctrine and one that inevitably leads either to bold security or to downright deep despair. We shall take up this doctrine again, when we speak of the Lutheran Church.

Concerning the **baptism of infants** and concerning the **mode of baptism,** false doctrine is taught by the **Baptists** of various names and types, and by the **Seventh Day Adventists.** The **Mennonites** share the position of these churches with regard to infant baptism.

These churches teach that infants are not to be baptized but only adults, who can be taught, who can believe and make a profession of faith. They also teach that Baptism must be performed by immersion.

This being a matter of common knowledge, we need not quote these sects on this subject.

And now, Christian reader, let us give you a piece of advice. If you ever speak to these people about Baptism, do not by any means consent to take up at once the question whether infants should be baptized, and whether Baptism should be performed by immersion or by pouring, but rather insist upon it that first and foremost this question be decided by the Baptists: **What is Baptism** and **what does it confer?** If you do this you will see at once that they, like all Reformed churches, consider Baptism a mere external sign and certificate of church membership, or of the remission of sins, which has been obtained, and of regeneration, which has been experienced, prior to baptism; and that they do not believe that Baptism does by the grace of God confer the forgiveness of sins and work regeneration. Now, as long as they insist upon such erroneous and antiscriptural doctrine, why argue with them as to whether infants should be baptized or not and whether Baptism should be performed by immersion or by pouring? If they insist that Baptism is a mere outward sign, nothing more, and of no earthly profit, why, then let them baptize whomsoever they will and in whatsoever manner they choose.

However, to strengthen your faith and to give you a saving assurance of these things, we would like to remind you briefiy of what the Word of God says about them.

First, as to **infant baptism.**

Touching baptism, Christ has given the following commandment: "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world. Amen." Matth. 28: 19. 20. Neither here nor anywhere in the Bible do we find that Christ has given an express commandment to baptize

men, or to baptize women, or children, or grown people. Neither do we find anywhere that Christ excludes any class or sex or age from this commandment. And if we consider this commandment in the Greek original we shall find that, translated literally, it reads: "Go ye and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them," etc. Now, since the commandment is so plainly universal, who has a right to declare that children shall be excluded from it.

What do we learn from the Bible concerning little children? The Lord Jesus says: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." John 3: 5. 6. Children are born of the flesh, of sinful parents; hence they are flesh, they are sinful. Hence, according to Christ, they must be born again, of water and of the Spirit, or they cannot enter the Kingdom of God. Now, shall they not enter the Kingdom of God?

Most assuredly they shall. For the Lord Jesus says: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." Mark 10: 14. And: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost." Matth. 18: 10. 11. Hence "water and the Spirit" must not be denied them, since that is the means whereby they, according to the rule that God has laid down for us, are brought into the Kngdom of God.

Were not little children eight days old brought into the Kingdom of God under the Old Testament by means of the Sacrament of Circumcision? And has not Baptism, in the New Testament, taken the place of Circumcision? The Apostle writes: "Ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the

sins of the flesh by the circumsion of Christ: buried with him in baptism." Col. 2: 11. 12. Hence the only Means of Grace that can be applied to little children, to-wit: Baptism, must certainly not be denied them.

And did not the Apostles baptize entire households and families and hence little children? Acts 16: 15. 33; I Cor. 1: 16. And infant baptism has always been practiced since Apostolic times.

The reason why Baptists and other sects reject infant baptism is because they neither will admit that every man is, by reason of original sin, a child of God's wrath from his very birth, nor that God, through baptism, confers upon sinners the salvation of Christ, and also the Holy Spirit, in order that they may accept such salvation by faith. If they believed these two things they surely would not deny to poor little children the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

But, they reply, little children cannot believe. What good would Baptism do them?

We reply: If it were true that little children cannot believe, they would, indeed, derive no benefit from the gracious gift of Baptism. For the Lord Jesus says: "He that **believeth** and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Mark 16: 16. But little children **can** believe. For through Baptism the Holy Spirit is given them, who works faith. Baptism is "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior." Tit. 3: 5. 6. And, though we fail to understand **how** little children believe, still we know **that they do believe.** For Christ expressly says of the little ones: "which believe in me." Matth. 18: 6. And He says: "Of such is the kingdom of God." Mark. 10: 14. This He surely would not say if the little children believed not. And was not John the Baptist filled with the Holy Ghost when yet in his mother's womb? See Luke 1: 15 and 44. Ah, the

faith of little children is a holy and blessed thing; and it is holier and brighter than the faith of grown persons, in whom perverted reason and evil lust, no longer dormant, but awakened and matured, are so exceedingly rebellious.

Hence there can be no doubt that the children of Christian parents should be baptized as early as possible, in order that by this holy Sacrament they may become believing children of God and heirs of eternal life. And in due time they should receive a Christian training in the Word of God and thus be strengthened and confirmed in their baptismal grace.

Now, as to the **mode of baptism.**

In the Bible no special mode of baptism is prescribed. Hence it is altogether immaterial whether we baptize by immersion or by pouring, or by sprinkling. The error which Baptists and other sects commit must not be sought in the fact that they baptize by immersion, but in the fact that they teach that baptism **must needs be performed by immersion.** The Greek words for baptize—the New Testament, you know, was originally written in Greek—is **baptizein.** And **baptizein** means to wash, neither more nor less, as you can easily see by the following text, in which the word rendered "wash" in the English Bible is **baptizein** in Greek. The text reads thus: "When they (the Pharisees) come from market, except they wash **(baptizein)** they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, and brasen vessels, and of tables." Mark 7:4. According to the Greek language, the things called tables in the English Bible were, in reality, broad, cushion-topped couches, which were placed before the tables at meal-time and on each of which from two to five persons reclined, resting on the left elbow and taking food with the right hand, the feet being turned toward the rear. Since these couches were part and parcel of the tables themselves at meal-time, the English Bible is right in

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simply calling them tables. We shall now quote the above text in a fashion which good and loyal Baptists should approve. Where the word "wash" **(baptizein)** occurs, we shall substitute the word "immerse." In this manner you can see what nonsense the Baptists are guilty of when they say "baptize" **(baptizein)** must be taken in the sense of **immerse.** Here you have the text in genuine Baptist fashion: "When they (the Pharisees) come from market, except they immerse (themselves) they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the immersing of cups, and pots, and brasen vessels, and of tables." These Pharisees must have had mighty reservoirs in their homes, if, before each meal, they were wont to immerse not only themselves but their very tables, the great couches, that were part and parcel thereof, included. And think of the difficult drying process. The cups and pots and brasen vessels they may have immersed, indeed. Our own housewives do such and similar things. In all likelihood the Pharisees, after the fashion of present-day Catholics, were in the habit of sprinkling themselves and everything pertaining to their meals with a kind of **holy water.** Numbers 19: 18.

Among the Baptists we may number the **Adventists,** who **claim to be able to foretell the time of Christ's advent or second coming,** although Christ Himself says: "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." Mark 13: 32. The father of the Adventists, a Baptist preacher named William Miller, born at Pittsfield, Massachusetts, in 1781, designated the fourteenth day of April, 1844, as the day of Christ's coming and had many followers. Now the Adventists are divided into numerous parties. Most numerous among these are the **Seventh Day Adventists,** who observe the Jewish Sabbath, as has already been shown. Hence their name. Though very zealous and apparently very saintly, the Seventh Day

Adventists are an abominable sect and scarcely worth numbering among those sects that are still entitled to the name of Christian sects. For they not only claim to be able to foretell the day of Christ's coming, but they deny and reject the doctrine of the **Holy Trinity,** of the **true divinity of Christ, of justification alone by faith in Jesus Christ.** Also they **deny that man has an immortal soul; the wicked,** they say, **will be utterly destroyed,** there is no hell, only the just will be raised up into everlasting life.

They say: "In numerous places the Bible teaches the pre-existence of Christ (i. e., that Christ existed before He was made man) and the divinity of Christ, but it says absolutely nothing about a trinity." "Since there is but one God, the term 'God,' when applied to the 'Word' (i. e., to the only begotten Son of the Father; John 1: 14) must be used in a subordinate sense (so that the Son is **subordinate,** inferior to the one God. . . . It is reasonable that the Son should bear the **name** and **title** of his Father. . . . We cannot believe what men say about his being co-essential with God in every respect." (Atonement, p. 98, 84f, 102.) So the Adventists say, it is true, that Christ existed before He was made man and that He is the Son of God and is divine, like His Father. They say: "He is the Son of God and like unto His Father, since He is the brightness of the glory of the Father and the express image of His person." (Personality of God, p. 7.) But they deny that Christ is co-essential with the Father and true God. They deny that God is triune. They maintain that Christ is a superior, divine, and very Godlike creature, that He existed, indeed, before He was made man, and that He is called the Son of God in the Bible; but they claim that He is God in name and title only. Of course, they also refuse to believe that the Holy Spirit is a person in God and co-essential with the Father and the Son.

Furthermore, they say: "A living faith is a faith with

works. A man is justified with a living faith only. Hence he is justified by faith and works, or obedience. An imperfect faith is a faith without works. But imperfect faith cannot justify any man; therefore no man can be justified by faith alone." (The Nature . . . of Chr. Bapt., p. 86.) This looks very well in print, but it is the genuine popish doctrine of salvation by works.

They say furthermore: "The estate of the dead. They are not with Christ in heaven . . . neither are they in hell-fire . . . they are in the grave . . . they sleep. They do not praise the Lord and they exercise no power of the Spirit." "Although the Bible speaks to us about the soul eight hundred thirty-seven times, yet it never mentions an immortal soul." (Scripture References, pp. 12. 20.) In fact, the Adventists do not believe that man has a soul which is distinguishable from the body, but regard the thing that is called soul a mere product of the faculties with which the body is endowed. The only distinction they make between the "soul" of man and that of a beast is this: the soul of man, they say, is more excellent than that of a beast, but essentially the two are the same.

Oh, how they enlarge upon this subject and how they adorn this theory with garbled Scripture texts! With preference they point to the words of Solomon: "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" Eccles. 3: 19-21. But they leave out of consideration the verse preceding this passage: "I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them and that they might see that they themselves are beasts." (v. 18.) In the light of this

verse we understand what Solomon means in the two following verses, to which the Adventists appeal. He means: God suffers things here on earth to appear as if men were like unto beasts, and as if they fared like beasts. And God's object in so doing is to prove those men who in their imaginary wisdom, will not be enlightened by His Word, and to manifest them and lay them bare in their blind folly and vanity. This is as far as their knowledge shall go, this, the height of their philosophy: We are like unto beasts. Further than this they cannot advance without God's Word and Spirit.

Finally the Seventh Day Adventists teach, as all Adventists do (except the so-called Evangelical Adventists, who teach that God is triune, that the soul is immortal, and that the wicked shall suffer eternal punishment in hell), that there is no hell for the wicked, but that the wicked are utterly desroyed. They are in accord with the Adventists doctrine: "The wicked will receive their punishment in the present world. Those who maintain the doctrine of an everlasting hell are never in a position to tell where such hell is . . . The wicked will be burned with fire and utterly consumed. . . . It will be done on the day of the Lord by the melting of the earth and of the elements in fervid heat. . . . After the wicked are burned, the earth will be purified and restored for the just." (The End of the World, p. 6.) Agreeable doctrine, that! We do not think it worth while to refute it with the Word of God.

The **Methodists,** of various shades and fellowships, together with the **Evangelical Association** and the **United Brethren,** profess and teach a number of peculiar false doctrines concerning **the Means of Grace** and concerning **Sanctification.**

Of the means of Grace we read in the Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Church: "The Means of Grace are either expressly prescribed in the Word of God

or they are rules of conduct taught by Christian wisdom. Those expressly prescribed in the Word of God are the following: prayer . . . searching of the Scriptures . . . the Lord's supper . . . fasting . . . Christian conversation. What rules of conduct may we observe as Christians, as Methodists or preachers? . . . These means may, indeed, be used without any blessing ensuing, but there are others Means of Grace which never fail to convey a blessing, such as watching, self-abnegation, taking up one's cross and walking in the presence of God." (par. 119-123.) In the Catechism of the Methodist Episcopal Church we read: "Which are some of the characteristics of the Methodist Episcopal Church? Her evangelical teaching, her circuit preachers, and her **special means of grace,** to-wit: the **love-feasts** and **class-meetings.**" (No. 3, p. 46.) [1] It is evident that the above-named sects, like all Reformed church bodies, will not perceive what Means of Grace God has ordained, to-wit: the Word and the Sacraments, and what divine power dwells in this means. Nay, more: they are given to all sorts of measures and methods of conversion, of their own choosing, which they place far above the simple use of the Word of God.

Of Sanctification the Methodists say in their Catechism: "What is Entire Sanctification? That state in which we are cleansed entirely from sin, so that we can love God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind, and our neighbor as ourselves." (No. 3, p. 40.) The Evangelical Association says in its Articles of Faith and Discipline, on this subject:"That such a state can be attained in this life is evident, because Christ and all His apostles exhort hereunto. . . . Experience also has fully convinced men that this state is attainable. and that some souls really have attained it. . . . We teach with one record that we can, **long** before we die,

[1] Translated from the German.

be redeemed from all sin, that is, from all evil inclinations and desires." (Ch. 3.) [1] This position is shared by the United Brethren. So these sects think that in this present life they can attain utter freedom from sin and perfect holiness. To justify this opinion they point to the fact that God requires us to be thus holy. But can we fulfill the requirements of God's Law? Then they point with preference to these two utterances of St. John: "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him." "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." I John 3: 6-9. But they **will not** perceive that the Apostle uses the words "sinneth" and "committeth sin" to denote a life given to the **service** of sin. For the Apostle says of **Christians,** who walk in the light: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." I John 1: 8-10. And: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." I John 2: 1. Read what the great Apostle Paul says concerning himself, Rom. 7: 14-25 and Phil. 3: 12-14.

With respect to such teachings of the Methodists and other sects the Catholic **"Kirchenzeitung"** of November 29, 1866, says quite truly: "Indeed, the Methodists are not real Protestants, and in their doctrine concerning good works and sanctification they believe almost the same as Catholics do."

Besides, the Methodist Episcopal Church is priest-ridden and popish in its church government. The con-

[1] Translated from the German.

gregations cannot choose their own pastors and have scarcely any rights.

Quite unique among the churches is the **Episcopal Church.** In her thirty-nine Articles of Religion and in other utterances of a Confessional nature we find all those false doctrines which characterize and betoken the Reformed church bodies. But in her **organization** and in her **ceremonies** she resembles the Church of Rome. She is governed by bishops, who claim to be successors to the Apostles, deriving their office from the Apostles in continuous succession by means of ordination. These bishops alone can ordain "priests" and "deacons." No ministration is valid, unless performed by a priest that is so ordained. The rite of Confirmation can be performed by the bishops only. The greatest importance is attached to the abundance of ceremonies. At the same time this church is extremely lax, or, as some prefer to call it, liberal. Her bishops, priests, and deacons may believe and teach and preach what they choose, so long as they leave intact the organization and the ceremonies. Denials of Christ and the Scriptures are freely and publicly uttered in the Episcopal Church and popish saint-worship and the Mass are not at all unknown.

The only redeeming feature of the Episcopal Church is this, that in her public worship she makes a lavish use of the Book of Common Prayer, for in this book there is, beside the aforementioned false doctrines, a sufficient amount of God's Word to save a poor sinner who in the simplicity of his heart believes in Jesus Christ.

Since all these things are well known and manifest to all, we do not think it necessary to quote from the Confessions of the Episcopal Church.

The **Salvation Army** teaches glaringly false doctrine concerning **the manner in which God reveals His will, concerning the Atonement through Christ Jesus, concerning Sanctification, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper.**

This may be seen from their book, "Doctrines and Discipline of the Salvation Army."

Of God's way of revealing His will we there read: "Does God communicate His will to men in any other way than through the written word? Yes. He speaks **directly** to the heart by the **Spirit,** and **by His Spirit** also **through one man** to another. . . . It is therefore wrong and misleading to argue that we have no other way of ascertaining the mind of the Spirit concerning our own salvation, or our duty to our fellows, except through the written word. (P. 82f.) This is deceiving enthusiasm. Read Gal. 1: 8. 9; II Tim. 3: 15-17; Luke 16: 31; also Jer. 23: 29-31.

Of the Atonement through Christ Jesus, this book teaches: "You will sometimes hear people talk about the finished work of Christ. What is meant by it? That Christ, when He died on the Cross, put Himself in the place of the sinner and bore the exact amount of punishment which he deserved, thus actually paying the debt that the sinner owed to divine justice. And that if the sinner will only believe this, he is forever free from the claims of the law and can never be brought into condemnation either here or hereafter. Is this so?" The entire Bible answers this question decidely in the affirmative. And every true Christian heartily indorses this answer and gives praise to God. And Christ Himself, as He died on the cross, cried aloud: "It is finished."

But how does the Salvation Army answer this question? It answers: **"We think not."** And it continues: "What is the correct view of the atonement? The Scriptures teach that Christ on the cross, in virtue of the dignity of His person, the voluntariness of His offering and the greatness of His sufferings, did make and present on behalf of poor sinners, a sacrifice of infinite value. And that this sacrifice, by showing all worlds the terrible evil of the sin man had committed, and the importance of

the law man had broken, did make it possible for the love and pity of God to flow out to man by forgiving all those who repent and return in confidence to Him." (pp. 23, 25:) This sounds very pious, but in reality it is a mere jumble of words. Christ's offering on the cross is declared to have done nothing more than to make it **possible** for God's sympathy and love to forgive a sinner's sins if he repent and return in confidence to God. **How** does the offering of Christ make this possible? **Why?** It is all so confused. The only thing that is stated clearly is that Christ did **not** pay our debt of sin when He died and that we are **not** justified in the sight of God by faith in Christ. And this is antiscriptural and wicked.

The book of the Salvation Army teaches thus concerning Sanctification. "What does the Army teach on the subject of Entire Sanctification? That a man may be delivered from **all** sin, and enabled to do the will of God **continually** in this life. . . . Can Sanctification be Partial? and can it be Complete? Yes; it is partial in nearly all pearsons when first converted, and entire when they are fully saved. . . . What is Entire Sanctification? Entire Sanctification supposes **complete deliverance.** Sin is **destroyed** out of the soul, and all the powers, faculties, possessions and influences of the soul are given up to the service and glory of God. . . . When **we** talk of Sanctification, or being Sanctified, do we not generally mean Entire Sanctification? Yes." (p. 49 ff.)

We dwelt upon this matter and pointed out God's Word with reference to it when speaking of the Methodists, whose teaching coincides with that of the Salvation Army in this point.

Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the Salvation Army says in its book: "Does the Army consider bapitsm as a duty that must be performed? Decidedly not. The Army only considers one baptism essential to salvation, and that is **The Baptism of The Holy Ghost.**" "What is the teach-

ing of the Army on the subject of the Lord's Supper? When such an ordinance is helpful to the faith of our soldiers we recommend its adoption. Is the ordinance of the Lord's Supper essential to membership in the Army, or to salvation? Certainly not." (p. 84.)

Thus they treat the precious institutions of our Lord Jesus Christ and the testimony, so abundant, of His Apostles.

Although there are many other sects that have sprung from the Reformed Church, still we believe, Christian reader, that you have now had sufficient training to enable you to prove such spirits by the Word of God.

D. The United Church.

This is the church which calls itself by preference the **Evangelical** Church. However, it also calls itself the **United Protestant** Church, the **United** Church.

The United Church is a union of the originally orthodox Lutheran Church and the originally unorthodox Reformed Church.

How was this union effected? Did the Reformed Church give up her false doctrines and does she now in all points, confess, with the Lutheran Church, the pure and unadulterated doctrines of the Word of God?

If such were the case, this union were right and pleasing to God and the United Church were the true Church.

But such is not the case.

In the United Church the union was effected in such manner that Lutheran and Reformed Christians form one congregation, that Lutheran and Reformed congregations form one church; that only those doctrines shall be accounted doctrines of the Church in which the Lutherans and the Reformedists agree; that those doctrines in which the Lutherans and the Reformedists do not agree shall make no difference in the Church, shall not be made the

subject of controversy, shall not be taught and proclaimed to the offense of one party or the other.

Is such a union right and pleasing to God? Is the United Church the true Church?

It most certainly is not.

Christian reader, we have shown you the false doctrines of the Reformed Church: concerning the authority of human reason in the interpretation of God's Word, concerning the person of Christ, concerning the Means of Grace, to-wit: the Word, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, concerning the Office of the Keys and Absolution, concerning Sunday, also concerning the Election of Grace. We have also shown you what the true doctrines of God's Word are in these points.

Now, how about these things? Shall these doctrines really make no difference in the Church? Shall these doctrines not be made the subject of controversy, that is, shall we not maintain that the Word of God is true and that it alone is entitled to recognition, in these points? And shall we not reject all lies and false doctrines in these points? Shall not the Word of God be plainly taught and proclaimed in these points, even though some do take offence? Shall we quietly and peaceably dwell in one church and one congregation with those who are given to a false belief and false doctrine in these points?

What God Himself says in answer to this question we have already pointed out to you in our answers to Question 6: **What, according to God's will, should be our attitude toward false churches?"**

Most assuredly these doctrines shall make a difference in the church! Most assuredly we shall maintain that the Word of God is true, and that it alone is entitled to recognition, in these points! Most assuredly the Word of God shall be plainly taught and proclaimed in these points, even though some do take offence! And most assuredly we shall not dwell peaceably and quietly in one congre-

gation and church with those who are given to a false belief and false doctrine in these points!

We shall mention but one example of how the United Church effects this union of the Lutheran and the Reformed Churches, of the true, and the false doctrine. The Lutheran Church teaches, in agreement with the Word of God, that the Lord's Supper is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine for us Christians to eat and to drink, instituted by Christ Himself. The Reformed Church teaches, contrary to the Word of God, that the Lord's Supper is merely a symbol of Christ's body and blood, that it merely **signifies** Christ's body and blood. Now, what does the United Church do? In administering the Lord's Supper she quotes Christ's words of institution and says, for example: Christ **says,** "Take, eat; this is my body," "drink ye all of it; this is my blood," and leaves it to every communicant to **believe** what he chooses. And in her catechisms and doctrinal books she indulges in a great deal of talk the gist of which is that the two doctrines, the Lutheran and the Reformed, amount to the same thing.

Of such doctrines Dr. Luther says: "And, in a word, lest I linger too long upon this point, I am horrified to hear that in one and the self-same church, or at one and the self-same altar, both parties should receive one and the self-same Sacrament and one party believe it is receiving mere bread and wine, while the other party believes it is receiving the true body and blood of Christ. And oftentimes I have my doubts whether it be credible that a preacher, or minister of souls, should be so hardened and so desperately wicked as to keep mum and allow both parties to depart each with its own opinion that they are both receiving one and the self-same Sacrament, every man according to his own belief. But if such (a pastor) there be, he must have a heart harder than stone, steel, or flint, he must indeed be an apostle of wrath. Give me a

Turk or a Jew in preference to such a preacher. For they disown our Sacrament and do it openly, and thus I am in no danger of being deceived by them and of being drawn unawares into their idolatry. But these fellows must be the real, exalted arch-devils, who would give me mere bread and wine and allow me to believe it to be the body and blood of Christ and thus deceive me shamefully. That were too galling, too exasperating. God will shortly wreak terrible vengeance upon those fellows. Wherefore let them that have such pastors, or that suspect their pastors of such dealings, beware of such knaves as of the very devil himself." (Luther's Works, Erl. Ed. 26, p. 304.)

The Lord Jesus says: "Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you," Matth. 28: 30. And He says: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8: 31. 32. Commenting on these words, Dr. Luther says: "A man that holds his doctrine, creed, and confession to be the very truth cannot stand in line with such as teach, or are given to, false doctrine; neither can he smile for ever and aye at the devil and his minions. A teacher who holds his peace in the face of error and yet insists that he is a teacher of the truth, is worse than an open enthusiast and does more harm with his hypocrisy than does a heretic and is unworthy of any man's confidence; he is a wolf and a fox, a hireling and a belly-servant, etc. One need not be surprised to see him set at naught doctrine, word, creed, sacrament, church, and school and surrender them to the enemy. Aye, either he is secretly at one with the enemy, or he is a doubter and a weather-cock, waiting to see which way the wind will blow, whether Christ or the devil will prevail. Or he doesn't know his own mind, and is not worthy to be called a disciple, much less a teacher. He is afraid to hurt any one's feelings, neither willing to stand up for Christ nor to hurt the devil and the world."

No, the union effected in the United Church is not right and pleasing to God and the United Church is not the true Church. Most assuredly it is not.

The United Church is a church born of indifference toward, and disbelief in, the Word of God, and is therefore contrary to the same, is a church loathsome to Christ and to all Christians, worse, far worse, than the manifestly unorthodox churches. To the United Church the words apply that Christ commanded John to write to the church at Laodicea: "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God: I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest: I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Rev. 3: 14-17. And what the Prophet says applies to her: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter." Isa. 5: 20. And what James writes applies to her: "Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? So can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh." James 3: 11-12.

And what, indeed, does such preaching and practice lead to? To a veritable chaos of false doctrines. Where the true teachings of God's Word are buried in silence, there false doctrine is bound to spread. This is manifested by the various catechisms and other doctrinal books of the United Church that are in use in this country.

O Christian, beware of the United Church!

In connection with the United Church, the Church of the **United Brethren,** also called the **Moravians,** must be mentioned. This sect makes it a principle to unite the

Lutheran and the Reformed doctrines, to the great detriment, of course, of the Lutheran, that is, of the true, doctrine of the Word of God. The peculiar characteristics of this sect are: sentimental enthusiasm, the casting of lots to determine the will of God, and a love-feast, consisting of tea and rolls, before partaking of the Lord's Supper. In missionary work the Moravians are very zealous.

9. Are there any so-called Christian churches which deny all the chief articles of the Christian religion, which offer no saving doctrine whatever, and are hence in no wise to be numbered among the Christian churches, not even among the unorthodox churches?

There are such. And we shall mention those which are best known and shall characterize them very briefly.

A. Christian Science. National Christian Scientist Association.

This association was founded in 1866 by Mrs. Mary B. Eddy. It has gone by the above name since 1886, has grown very numerous and seduces many whose hearts are not firmly established in the Word of God. The doctrines of this association are contained in the writings of its founder, chiefly in her very confused work, "Science and Health, with Key to the Scriptures," and are very largely borrowed from the philosophy of heathen India. But Mrs. Eddy invariably adorns her doctrine with madly abused and distorted Scripture texts.

We shall present to you, dear reader, the whole substance of Mrs. Eddy's doctrines in one brief and pointed statement. If you remember this statement well you will know precisely what Christian Science is and no one will

be able to deceive you. And you will also see that Christian Science is absolutely unchristian, and it will be wholly unnecessary to refute it by the Word of God.

Here is the sum and substance of Mrs. Eddy's Christtian Science:

There is no personal God, but everything that is, is God. You, too, are God. God is good and perfect, without sin, without sickness, without pain, without death. Since everything that is, is God, everything that is, is good and perfect. There is no sin, no sickness, no pain, no death. Sin, sickness, pain, and death are nothing but imagination, "error." [1] **If through reading Mrs. Eddy's book and with the aid of "healers" you impress firmly upon your mind and firmly believe that you are God and therefore good and perfect, you can be healed of the imagination and error that is called sin, sickness, pain, death. This is "mind healing" and "faith cure." Jesus Christ was the perfect man, the God-man,** [2] **the Christian Scientist proper, the great Healer. For Himself He conquered all imagination and error of sin, sickness, pain and death, and healed others, yea, raised them up. This is seen from the Bible and from His doctrine. He that becomes like Jesus Christ can do the same. This stage has not been reached as yet. But it is coming.**

There you have it. There it is. Mrs. Eddy herself was recently "in error" so and so long, till she finally "died." But she is soon to rise.

That Christian Science can point to some healings we have no doubt. But how are these healings effected?

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[1] Here we have a piece of folly: If everything is God and good and perfect, how can there be any imagination and error? Imagination and error surely are not good and perfect. This folly cannot be explained away by means of philosophy.

[2] In Mrs. Eddy's sense of the word.

First, by means of the powerful imagination which it produces in the minds of credulous people. As one can get sick, yea, even die, of a powerful imagination, so one can likewise be healed by means of powerful imagination, at least of some sickness. This is quite natural. Innumerable cases could be cited outside of Christian Science. Who does not know that a severe toothache will oftentimes disappear very suddenly when the sufferer arrives at the dentist's office in great fear and trembling? There may, indeed, be some cases of healing in Christian Science in which the devil has a hand. God's hand surely is not in it.

B. The Spiritualists.

The Spiritualists say of themselves: "Spiritualists are (all) those who believe that all human beings have immortal spirits in these bodies; that when these bodies die our spirits are borne out into the spirit world; . . . . that spirits may return and manifest themselves to us in many ways." "Spiritualists believe that spirits come to earth as angels of God to exert holy influences upon us, to awaken the better endowments of our . . . hearts . . . to watch over us, warn us against danger, remind us of our duties, fill our hearts with love, etc." "Spiritualists believe there is a supreme power and intelligence, called God, but that no two men have the same conception. They believe in Jesus Christ and all great and good men and women and that we all have in us the same elements of greatness and goodness." (S. S. Manual, pp. 66, 67, 76.) "As for man, we believe . . . that he originally was, and still is, a free agent in all things, . . . that every man must work out his own salvation and be his own savior." (Am. Chr. Record, p. 327.)

The Spiritualists are nohting more than heathen. They mention the name of Jesus Christ; but to them Jesus Christ is merely what all great and good men and women

are. Of a Savior they have no need. They try their skill at calling up spirits and spooks, like the witch of Endor, I Sam. 28. Nay, they are inferior to the heathen, for "God" is, to them, merely a name denoting supreme power and intelligence.

No Christian will allow himself to be humbuged by such people.

C. The Unitarians.

The Unitarians deny the divine inspiration of Holy Writ, the trinity of God, the divinity of Christ, original sin, the redemption in Christ Jesus, and eternal punishment in hell. What earthly title have these people to the name of Christians?

D. The Universalists.

The Universalists teach that the souls of men die with their bodies, that all punishment for sin is meted out in this life, that in the resurrection all men will be saved. In all other respects they are exactly like the Unitarians.

E. The Swedenborgians.

These people are also called the Church of **the New Jerusalem.**

They deny the trinity of God. They say that God has a body. They reject the Book of Acts and all the Epistles of the Apostles, and accept the writings of their founder, the Swedish baron, Emanuel Swedenborg, as a divine revelation. They believe neither in angels nor in devils and declare that the beings so called in the Bible are the departed spirits of good and of wicked men respectively. The Biblical account of the fall of Adam and Eve they do not believe to be a true story, they revile the Bible doctrine of original sin, ascribe to man a perfectly free will in spiritual matters, utterly reject the doctrine of the redemption through Christ Jesus and of justification through faith

in Him, deny the resurrection of the body, and claim that the departed spirits of men are conveyed to a place situated between heaven and hell, where they are to be made fit for heaven, but whence those that are incorrigible go to hell.

Can these people be Christians?

F. The Mormons.

The Mormons also call themselves **The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.**

The founder of this society was Joseph Smith (born 1805). This man claimed that he had found in a hill near Palmyra, New York, a set of golden plates covered with hieroglyphics, said to be prophecies relating to a Jewish tribe which, he declared, had immigrated to America in the days of King Zedekiah and from which, he claimed, the Indians descended. These prophecies, according to Smith, had been collected by Mormon and son and hidden in the ground for the Saints of Latter Days. Smith said he had also found two little stones near the plates, which enabled him to read the revelations and prophecies. Thus the "Book of Mormon" originated, which, according to Smith, is an English translation of the aforesaid prophecies. That was in 1830. In the same year he founded his "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints." And to make all things fit together, he, in 1830-1833, made an altered Bible, which de declared to be the correct translation. In 1835 he also made some further "revelations": The Book of Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints; selected from the revelations of God. By Joseph Smith, president.

First the Mormons settled in Ohio, then in Missouri. In 1838 they were driven out of Missouri on account of bad conduct and went to Illinois. They were also driven out of Illinois, Joseph Smith and his brother being lynched, and under the leadership of their new seer, reve-

lator, and prophet, Brigham Young, they migrated to Utah, where they now reside, and where they have their temple. Since 1887 Wilford Woodruff is their "seer, revelator, and first president." The Mormons deny the trinity of God and teach a strange compound of all manner of heathen philosophies; at the same time they call all Christians and all non-Mormons gentiles, which means heathen. They are actively engaged in proselyting everywhere and ignorant women, especially, fall a ready prey to their seductions. Their polygamy (plural marriages) is a matter of common knowledge.

This enumeration of non-Christian "churches" will suffice.

10. Which is now the orthodox Church, the Church of the pure Word and Sacraments, to which, according to the will of God, every Christian should belong?

It is the Evangelical Lutheran Church, namely, the Church of the Reformation which God effected by Martin Luther; its fundamental Confession of Faith is the Augsburg Confession, and its Confession in full is contained in the Book of Concord of 1580.

11. Are all church bodies that style themselves Evangelical Lutheran and in their constitutions base themselves upon the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church—are all these churches really and truly orthodox?

Alas, they are not! Most of these church bodies have departed from the aforesaid Confessions and are, therefore, not orthodox.

In the following we shall mention and characterize those among these church bodies which are best known to us and with which we come in closest contact.

A. The State Churches of Germany.

The conditions prevailing in these churches are exceedingly sad. They are state churches. They are fitted into the organism of the temporal state; they are each and all under the direction of a state minister of public worship and education; even their immediate church boards are state boards, their preachers and teachers are servants of the state. We have before us a certificate of Baptism issued by the "royal ministry of Bavaria" at N. Of doctrinal discipline, that is, of insistence upon orthodox teaching according to the Word of God and the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, there is no thought, there can be no thought. There are preachers in the Lutheran state churches who preach and teach correctly the chief articles of the Christian religion. There are more preachers there who preach and teach numerous false doctrines. There are still more preachers there who preach and teach precisely as they see fit, without the slightest regard for the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, notwithstanding they are sworn to these Confessions in keeping with the constitution of the church. There are preachers in the Lutheran state churches who preach and teach bald unbelief. We recollect that the first pastor of the principal church of the City of Leipzig, Kingdom of Saxony, preached Christ, while the associate pastor denied Him. These two men took turns in preaching, celebrated the Lord's Supper jointly, and both prepared the youth of the church for Confirmation. Among the professors of theology, from whom the coming pastors receive their training, there is now not one that is really orthodox, not a single one.

But the number of those is legion by whom the Bible and Christ is reviled. Under such conditions, what is to become of the people? What has become of them already? Like a raging torrent, proud unbelief rushes through the state churches of Germany, sweeping almost everything before it. We recall a Sunday morning in a certain city church in Holstein, which had an enrollment of about forty thousand souls. The service was attended that morning by from two hundred fifty to three hundred persons. And the people congratulated one another upon the good attendance! In the country, indeed, better conditions do prevail in some places. But even among those who attend church faithfully there very naturally is prevalent a woeful weakness in knowledge of the divine Word and of the doctrine of Christ.

Are these state churches of Germany, which call themselves Evangelical Lutheran Churches, and which in their constitutions avow the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church—are they orthodox? They most certainly are not. Every true and sincere Christian that is in them should come out and should join an Evangelical Lutheran Church that really is what it professes to be.

B. The General Synod.

Aside from her Evangelical Lutheran name, this synod, or rather combination of kindred synods in America, has not a single feature that would make her an Evangelical Lutheran, that is, an orthodox, synod. Originally her constitution contained no declaration of a Confessional nature. Later she inserted a clause committing her to the Holy Scriptures and to the Augsburg Confession. But **how** did she commit herself to the Holy Scriptures and to the Augsburg Confession? She declared that the Word of God is **"contained"** in the Holy Scriptures and that the Augsburg Confession is a correct exhibition of the **"fundamental doctrines"** of the Word of God. Dear reader, if

the Word of God is merely "contained" in the Holy Scriptures, then the Holy Scriptures may also contain other things, which are not the Word of God. And if the Augsburg Confession merely exhibits the "fundamental doctrines" of the Word of God correctly, there may be other doctrines which she exhibits incorrectly. And, as a matter of fact, all manner of false doctrines are rampant in the General Synod, while clearly revealed doctrines of Holy Writ and of the Lutheran Confessions are openly rejected. And the right hand of fellowship is extended to all the unorthodox sects. It is no easy matter to see why the General Synod calls herself an Evangelical Lutheran synod and why, in her constitution, she makes any mention of the Augsburg Confession.

In the southern part of our country there is another general synod, another combination of kindred synods, known as **"The United Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the South."** This synod originally belonged to the above named General Synod, but in the Civil War she seceded on account of the slavery question, and formed an independent organization with the above name and title. In her constitution she commits herself to all the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. In 1878, however, the former fraternal relations with the General Synod she had quitted were restored and she tolerates false doctrine and practice in the synods connected with her.

C. The General Council.

"The General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" is another combination of kindred synods. In her constitution she holds aloft the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. But in her most approved books of sermons in her church papers she tolerates doctrines that are manifestly false. She suffers her pastors and even her presidents to open their

pulpits to the preachers of unorthodox sects and to officiate jointly with such preachers. Yea, she tolerates, in practice, intercommunion with such as belong to unorthodox churches. She suffers her pastors and church members to belong to lodges. This is, practically, church union, the state of affairs that prevails as a matter of principle in the United Church. An orthodox Christian cannot have fellowship with the General Council and do the will of God.

D. The Iowa Synod.

In her constitution this synod holds aloft the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

The Iowa Synod was founded in 1854 in opposition to the Missouri Synod, because the Missouri Synod showed a determination to abide by the Word of God and the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

The Iowa Synod confesses and teaches a number of false doctrines in common, and shoulder to shoulder, with the Ohio Synod. We shall take up these false doctrines when we consider the Ohio Synod.

At present we merely purpose to show that the Iowa Synod confesses and teaches a doctrine both false in itself and inconsistent with a right attitude toward the Word of God and the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. We mean her doctrine concerning so-called **"open questions."**

What do we commonly mean by an "open question?" We mean a question to which one cannot give, or at least cannot give at the present time, a true and definite answer. Men may hold different opinions respecting an "open question," without being convicted for the present, or without ever being convicted, of error.

Now, in what sphere does the Iowa Synod seek and find "open questions"? In the sphere of Christian doctrine.

Let us hear her own statements regarding this matter.

In a declaration of the clergy of the Iowa Synod, made in 1859, a certain definite Christian doctrine is spoken of. We shall not name this doctrine now, lest the attention of our readers be drawn away from the main point now concerning us. The main point now concerning us is that you understand what the Iowa Synod means when she treats any Christian doctrine as an "open question." Well, in the declaration just referred to we read the following words: "We treat the doctrine of . . . as an open question; i. e., as a question on which men may hold differing opinions without disturbing the existing fraternal relations, as a question on which the Confessions of our Church have not, as yet, rendered any Symbolical decisions, wherefore both views may be tolerated side by side in the church."

Then, later on, in 1875, the Iowa Synod, as may be seen from a pamphlet entitled: "Synodical Constitution of the Synod of Iowa and Other States," says the following:

"Touching open questions, we declare that we heartily reject the opinion that open questions are doctrines which, though answered in the Word of God, remain undecided and uncertain until they are determined by the decisions of the Church; we declare that to us the term open question is equivalent to 'question that are not Church-splitting.'"

We shall now seek to get a clear and simple conception of what the Iowa Synod really says in the above quoted statements.

From the first statement we learn the following: There are doctrines, Christian doctrines, of course, which are treated by the Iowa Synod as "open questions." What does this mean? In these doctrines, says the Iowa Synod, there may be differences of opinion. Differences of opinion in these doctrines are no barrier to church fellowship. What manner of doctrines are these? The Iowa Synod

says: They are doctrines "on which the Confessions of our Church have not, as yet, rendered any Symbolical decisions." This sentence is a little high-sounding. What does it mean? It means: There are various doctrines in the Church of which the Confesional writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church have not as yet said quite decidedly and expressly: Thus we believe, teach, and confess; and we reject and condemn every doctrine not in keeping herewith; and **therefore** (observe the "wherefore" in Statement 1) differing views may be held in the Church with respect to such doctrines.

From the second statement we learn: The Iowa Synod heartily rejects a certain opinion. What opinion? The opinion that a question of doctrine is an "open question" even though it be answered in the Word of God. If God's Word answers the question, it can no longer be open in the sense that there may be indecision and uncertainty as to the right answer, says the Iowa Synod. One need not wait for the decision of the Church, in order to determine how the question must be answered. This is perfectly right. But the Iowa Synod continues: In another sense questions of doctrine may be "open questions." In what sense? They need not be **Church-splitting** questions. What does that mean? It means: Men may very well be and remain members of one church and one communion, even though they do hold differing opinions respecting such questions, even though they disagree in their answers to such questions, even though they do hold and teach conflicting opinions concerning such questions.

Let us examine these two statements yet more closely.

In the first statement, that of 1859, the Iowa Synod tells us what she means when she calls Christian doctrines "open questions." She says certain doctrines are "open questions" in this sense: that men may hold different opinions respecting them without disturbing the existing fraternal relations, that is, without loosening the bonds of

church fellowship. The Iowa Synod abides by this statement to this very hour.

However, in the first statement of 1859 the Iowa Synod also states the reason why ("wherefore") she calls certain Christian doctrines "open questions" and treats them as such: **"because the Confessions of our Church have not as yet rendered any Symbolical decisions upon them,"** because these doctrines have not yet been expressly and definitely determined by decision of the Church.

In the second statement, that of 1875, the Iowa Synod declares that Christian doctrines must not be regarded and treated as **"open** questions" **because** they are not yet "determined by decision of the Church," but "open questions" she declares them to be nevertheless, that is, **not Church-splitting** questions.

In the second statement, therefore, in that of 1875, the Iowa Synod contradicts her former statement, that of 1859, concerning the reason why ("wherefore") she calls certain Christian doctrines "open questions" and treats them as such.

But in both statements, that of 1859 and that of 1875, the Iowa Synod says that there are doctrines which are "open questions," which, therefore, are not **Church-splitting,** doctrines respecting which men may hold differing opinions, without loosening the bonds of Church-fellowship. In this thing the Iowa Synod is true to herself.

Well, why, for what reason, does the Iowa Synod today call certain doctrines "open questions" and treat them as such?

We believe and declare, with a due sense of our responsibility to God, that in the statement of 1875 and to this day the leaders of the Iowa Synod are treating the Church to a piece of jugglery. For to this day they declare in a statement regarding their synodical constitution that the Iowa Synod does not contemplate any change of her Confessional standpoint, but that she intends to abide by

her second statement, that of 1875, in form and wording and mode of expression, merely because it is simpler and less offensive and less liable to misinterpretation, but that the former utterance and the present one are substantially one and the same.

But let us get still closer to the matter.

Which are the doctrines that the Iowa Synod calls "open questions" and treats as such?

They are the following doctrines of God's Word: The doctrine of **the Church,** the doctrine of **the ministry,** the doctrine of **Church government,** the doctrine of **the last or final things,** that is, of the things to occur on earth and in the Kingdom of God just before, and on, the last day, the doctrine of **Antichrist,** the doctrine of **Sunday.**

These doctrines the Iowa Synod numbers expressly among the "open questions;" of these doctrines she says expressly that men may hold differing opinions concerning them without loosening the bonds of Church-fellowship; in these points especially men are at liberty to believe and teach as they see fit in the Iowa Synod.

But, Christian reader, are not these doctrines, every one of them, doctrines of the Word of God? Are not these doctrines, every one of them, doctrines in which the Word of God speaks a clear, plain, and definite language? The Word of God always speaks a clear, plain, and definite language, in every one of its doctrines. Take the very first doctrine that Iowa designates as an open question, the doctrine of the Church, which is presented in the fore part of this book. In reading it there did we observe any lack of clearness or definiteness in the language the Bible employs to present this doctrine? Even so it is with the doctrine of the ministry, and of Church government, and of the last or final things, and of Antichrist, and of Sunday. What the Word of God says about Antichrist and about Sunday we have likewise pointed out on these pages, And of the last or final things we shall speak in a

separate chapter. And the Confessions of our Church likewise express themselves on all these doctrines in clear, plain, and definite language.

What is Iowa's object in calling these doctrines "open questions"? Ah, she would practice unionism. She would do the same thing the United Church is doing. She would make a sort of hash of all manner of beliefs and doctrines.

In conclusion, we would show what may be called an "open question" in the Church and what may not.

All those questions may be called "open questions" which are not answered in the Word of God. The so-called theological problems are open questions. For instance: What was the nature of the light which God created on the first day? What is the nature of the water above the firmament, which is divided from the water under the firmament? In what manner was St. Paul caught up to the third heaven, and what is meant by this third heaven? In fine, all those questions which concern themselves with things the Word of God does not reveal—all those are theological problems, open questions, questions concerning which every man may have his own opinion without loosening the bonds of Church-fellowship. Notwithstanding, he that has an opinion concerning such questions, or that even expresses such opinions, he must know and say that these things are problems, open questions; he dare not hold his opinion as a divine truth, nor give it as such.

All those questions are **not** open questions which **are** answered in the Word of God. If God has answered a question in His Word, how can it then be "open"? And it is altogether immaterial what manner of question it may be, altogether immaterial whether it be a question "of great importance" or a question "of minor importance." If God has answered the question in His Word, the answer is final and every Christian is bound to respect it, even as he is bound to respect God Himself. It is like-

wise altogether immaterial whether the Confessions of our Church expressly answer the question or not. And it is a thing not to be tolerated in the Church that a man set up his own opinion, or that of other people, against the Word of God and adhere to such opinion, or even proclaim it, concerning any question whatsoever. The Apostle Paul says by the Holy Ghost: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment." I Cor. 1: 10. And we must do this in accordance with the Word of God and within the bounds of God's Word.

However, if, in a church or communion opinions or doctrines arise that do not conform to the Word of God, Christians must not straightway rush to arms and refuse fellowship with those holding or uttering such opinion. St. Paul did not deal thus with the Corinthians when such things had occurred among them. Christians should seek to teach and enlighten their erring brethren, and that with all patience and long-suffering. Thus did St. Paul. And only when the erring ones stubbornly adhere to these false opinions and doctrines shall their fellow Christians refuse to fellowship with them any longer. In such event, however, Christians are **required** so to do. God wills and commands them so to do, as you have seen under Question 6 of this book.

E. The Ohio Synod.

This synod also, in her constitution, holds aloft the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

"From 1818 on this church body existed under the name of a General Conference, but later constituted itself as the 'Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Ohio and Other States.' For several decades this synod was unionistic, but in the course of time assumed a Lutheran coloring.

Up to 1871 she stood quite alone, neither uniting with the General Synod nor with the General Council. However, in 1871, having declared herself in harmony with the Missouri Synod in point of doctrine, the Ohio Synod, together with the Missouri Synod, took membership in the Synodical Conference. But only ten years later she severed her connection with this body. She had drifted away from the Lutheran doctrine of Election and from various other Lutheran doctrines, and in a written statement, bearing date September 21, 1881, she withdrew from the orthodox Church. Since that day she has stood alone, just as she formerly did, and obstinately refuses to give up her false doctrines." (Grosse, Distinctive Doctrines, p. 30.)

Let us try to get a thorough understanding of this matter.

Some time prior to the aforestated secession of the Ohio Synod from the Synodical Conference, a professor and several pastors of the Missouri Synod had, together with a professor of the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Synod, which likewise belonged to the Synodical Conference,[1] publicly accused the Missouri Synod of having accepted a new and false doctrine of **Election,** to-wit: the doctrine of **Calvin** and the Calvinists. What the false doctrine of Calvin and his followers is, concerning Election, we had occasion to point out when we spoke of certain special false doctrines taught by some of the Reformed church bodies (p. 75). Doctrinal discipline proved of no avail. Yea, the men in question were found to make the same accusation against Missouri touching the doctrine of **Conversion** (p. 76), and even dissented from Missouri in the doctrine of **Justification.** So Missouri's accusers left the Missouri Synod and opened up negotations with Ohio. And Ohio championed their

[1] The so-called Synodical Conference is a federation of synods professing a common faith.

cause. The Norwegian accuser left the Norwegian Synod and joined another Norwegian church body, which shared his doctrinal position, and the Ohio Synod, as we have said, withdrew from the Synodical Conference.

Now, he that would gain a clear conception of this controversy must not begin by taking up the doctrine of Election. No one can rightly understand the doctrine of Holy Writ concerning Election unless he has a correct understanding of the doctrines of Justification and Conversion. In like manner, no one can form a true judgment of the controversy which the Synodical Conference has with the Ohio Synod touching the doctrine of Election except he have formed a true judgment of the controversy which the Synodical Conference has with the Ohio touching Justification and Conversion. Also, if one should undertake to discuss doctrinal matters with an Ohioan, it were very foolish and to no purpsoe to begin with the doctrine of Election. First an agreement must be reached in the doctrines of Justification and Conversion.

Thus also in this book we must first seek to form a true estimate of the controversy which the Synodical Conference has with the Ohio Synod concerning **Justification.**

Every Christian knows that "Justification" is the same as forgiveness of sins. Nor is this disputed by the Ohio Synod. On the contrary, Ohio affirms that he who has forgiveness of sins is just in the sight of God, is justified.

Every Christian knows furthermore that we receive forgiveness of sins, or justification, by faith. Neither is this disputed by the Ohio Synod.

Thus far there is no controversy.

But now the controversy begins.

The Synodical Conference says: In Christ forgiveness of sins, or justification, is already accomplished and is held in store for the entire world. When God accepted Christ's atoning sacrifice for the entire world, He forgave

the sins of all the world and justified the world unto eternal life. This forgiveness of sins and justification, which is in Christ, God offers to all the world by means of His Word and Holy Spirit. And whosoever accepts this forgiveness of sins and justification possesses it. In this manner we receive, by faith, the forgiveness of sins and are justified and saved.

The Ohio Synod says: "We believe and confess that in the atoning work of Jesus Christ holy and merciful God has met us half-way, as it were, so that now He is able to forgive and justify us; justification itself, however, is not accomplished until, by the grace of God, the spark of faith has been kindled in a poor sinner's heart; then God forgives the sinner's sins unto him." **(Kirchenzeitung,** January 17, 1905.) And the Ohio Synod declares that, by the doctrine that all men's sins were forgiven when Christ finished His work of atonement, the Scriptural doctrine of Justification is abolished. **(Kirchenzeitung** of January 10, 1905.)

Who is right? Who is right according to the Word of God: the Synodical Conference or the Ohio Synod? Read each party's statement once more.

The Word of God says: "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came up all men unto condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Rom. 5: 18. And: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." II Cor. 5: 19.

And our Confession says: "We believe, teach, and confess that faith alone is the means and instrument whereby we lay hold of Christ, and thus in Christ of that righteousness which avails before God, for the sake of which this faith is imputed to us for righteousness (Rom. 4: 5)." (F. C., Ep. III, Aff. 3.[1])

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[1] Translation by Jacobs.

And we beg to ask: How can faith grasp, in Christ, the righeousness that avails in the sight of God, except this righteousness have been, prior to faith, prepared by Christ and except it be kept in store for us in Christ and be offered and handed to us through God's Word and Holy Spirit, as the Synodical Conference says?

Now, where do we find in the Word of God what the Ohio Synod says? Where do we find in the Word of God that in Christ's atoning work holy and merciful God has only **met us half-way,** so that now He is **able** to forgive us our sins and justify us; that justification itself is not accomplished until, by the grace of God, the spark of faith has been kindled in a poor sinner's heart, and that God then forgives the sinner's sins? Nowhere do we find this in the Bible.

If, in the atoning work of Christ, God has only met us half-way, so that now He is merely **able** to forgive us our sins; if justification itself is not accomplished until faith is in the sinner's heart: why, then the atoning work of Christ is not sufficient to effect forgiveness and justification, but our faith must also contribute something to this end.

Ohio's position in this matter is shared by Iowa.

Both synods deprive justifying faith of its Biblical character, that of simply receiving, accepting, and grasping, the forgiveness of sins which is in store for all the world in Christ Jesus; and in an unbiblical manner ascribe to it a different character. What character? This, that by our faith we so conduct ourselves as to contribute something toward our forgiveness and justification.

That such is the case we shall see clearly when we—now—learn to understand the controversy which the Synodical Conference has with the Ohio Synod concerning the doctrine of **Conversion.**

Every Christian knows that conversion is identical with faith in Jesus Christ. And this is not disputed by

the Ohio Synod. The Ohio Synod affirms that he who believes in Christ is converted.

Every Christian knows that we believe in Jesus Christ—or that we are converted—by the grace of God by means of His Word and Holy Spirit. The Ohio Synod says as much.

Thus far there is controversy.

But now the controversy begins.

The Synodical Conference says: Faith in Jesus Christ, or conversion, is wrought wholly and solely by the grace of God through God's Word and Holy Spirit. Man can not in any wise or in any conceivable manner contribute anything toward his own conversion. Man's conversion does not depend in the least upon man himself. It depends on God alone. For, prior to his conversion, before he is converted, man is, in spiritual matters, in matters pertaining to faith, entirely blind, altogether dead, yea, he is God's enemy and withal Satan's captive and slave, and has neither trace nor semblance of a free will. The only thing, therefore, that a man, prior to his conversion, before his conversion has been effected, the only thing that he can do when the grace of God, through God's Word and Holy Spirit, comes near him and seeks to convert him, is: resist such grace and that with all hostility and malice and with all the strength at his command. The moment a man ceases from such resistance, or any resistance, against the grace of God, and assumes a proper conduct toward such grace; the moment his will is, by the grace of God, made free, so that it sees that the Gospel of Christ is divine truth: then, aye, then, things have not come to such a pass that such a man **can,** by the grace of God, be converted, or that he then **undergoes** conversion, but then, aye, things have come to such a pass that said man **is** converted; faith **is** kindled in his heart, the new spiritual life **is** created, and that solely and entirely by the grace of God through God's Word and Holy

Spirit. The man himself has contributed nothing, absolutely nothing, toward his conversion. If, on the other hand, a man is not converted by the grace of God when such grace comes near him and seeks to convert him, if he does not become a believer, is not born again: then the fault is his, and his alone; he **would** not. In no wise is the non-conversion of a man to be attributed to God, as though God had not done to such a man what He has done to others, who are converted. Here human reason is utterly at sea. Grant that two men are in equal guilt, that God's gracious will is the same toward both, that God's Word and Holy Spirit is equally efficacious toward both, and you cannot comprehend how one can be converted while the other is not. This is one of the inscrutable mysteries of God, the solution of which Divine Wisdom has reserved unto herself. Human reason cannot reconcile these two things. We believe exactly what the Word of God tells us and silence human reason.

Thus says the Synodical Conference.

The Ohio Synod says: "When the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God, works at the heart of a man in order to convert and save him, and yet that man is not converted and saved, this is due solely and entirely to the fact that that man has failed to properly conduct himself toward the Holy Spirit's saving grace at work upon his heart; **had he properly conducted himself—a thing he was able to do in the strength of such grace at work upon his heart —he would have been converted and saved without fail. From this it follows as a thing beyond dispute that in a certain respect conversion and salvation depend also upon man and not upon God alone."** ..**(Theol. Zeitblaetter,** 1887, p. 325.)

In what way can a man properly conduct himself toward the saving grace of the Holy Spirit at work upon his heart, so as to be converted and saved without fail?

The Ohio Synod replies: **He can abstain from wilful and wanton resistance** (against such grace). And of this wilful and wanton resistance she says: "Obviously, it is not **that** resistance which is natural, which is common to all men, and which clings to the very best of Christians down to their dying day; for in that case the Holy Spirit could not convert any one in the general order of salvation. It is an extraordinary resistance, a resistance superadded to the natural resistance, a wilful and wanton resistance, a resistance which, at the time it is exercised, one is able to abstain from in the power one then has." **(Theol. Zeitblaetter,** 1904, p. 73.) What power does one then have? What power does a man possess when he is not converted as yet, but is still under the Holy Spirit's saving grace at work upon his heart? The Ohio Synod replied: "We mean simply this: that God in the process of conversion, does so influence a man and, unless conversion is to be regarded as the result of an irresistible grace, **must** so influence a man, that, under such influence, he is **able** to abstain from that resistance which he at all times has the power to exercise against even the most abounding grace. And this ability one may also call a **power;** not a power that has passed into his permanent possession, indeed, but one that the Holy Spirit is, by the means of grace, transmitting unto him who is in the process of conversion." **(Theol. Zeitblaetter,** May, 1905.) The meaning of this statement of Ohio's is the following: When God comes to a man with His Word and Holy Spirit in order to convert and save him, then God **must** endue this man, before he is converted, with such power that he is **able** to properly conduct himself, namely, to abstain from a certain wilful and wanton resistance. This power is transmitted by the Holy Spirit through the means of grace unto every man upon whom He is, by the means of grace, performing His work. If such a man, unconverted as yet, makes right use of this power, he will be converted without fail. And

thus, in this respect, conversion and salvation do not depend upon God alone, but also upon man.

The Iowa Synod says: "Whether a man will be saved or lost depends, in the last analysis, upon that man's own free decision either for or against God's grace." (Brobst, **Theolog. Monatshefte,** 1872, p. 49.) "Two men, A and B, each hear the Gospel. In A's case resistance (against God's grace at work in the Gospel) and death is taken away; in B's case it is not. The cause of this is to be sought in the free self-determintaion of these men, although such free self-determination was only made possible by the grace of God." (**Ibid.,** p. 80.) "That two men may hear the Gospel and one of them come to believe while the other does not, this, according to the Bible, has its cause solely and entirely in man's decision" (for or against the Gospel). (p. 82.) "He (God) suffers man's decision to determine whom He shall have mercy upon and whom He shall harden." (p. 88.) "The sober truth that man decides for or against salvation must be strongly emphasized." (p. 98.)

Thus Iowa stands exactly where Ohio does, and to this day she has faithfully stood by Ohio, in full agreement with her in her controversy with the Synodical Conference.

Both synods flatly contradict all that the Synodical Conference says about a man's conversion. Look at the matter once more.

Both synods, Ohio, and Iowa, teach that faith in Jesus Christ, or conversion, are **not** solely and entirely due to the grace of God; that a man **is able** to contribute something toward his own conversion, namely, to **properly conduct himself** toward the converting grace of the Holy Spirit at work upon him; that his conversion does **not** depend on God alone, but depends, in a certain respect, **upon himself** also; hence, that a man, **before** his conversion, is able to do something more than merely resist the grace of God, that he is able to **abstain from wilful and**

wanton resistance; that when a man does abstain from this wilful and wanton resistance, and when he does properly conduct himself toward the grace of God, and when his will has been made free: that when he **is not** yet converted, but that then he **can** be converted and **will** be converted without fail; that a man **has** the freedom to decide for salvation. And both synods see **no** inscrutable divine mystery **whatever** in the fact that of two men to whom the Gospel is preached one is liable to be converted while the other is not.

Who is right? Who is right according to God's Word, the Synodical Conference or the Ohio and Iowa Synods?

The Word of God says: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." I Cor. 2: 14. Thus it is with the natural man, i. e., with the man that is not yet converted: when the Holy Spirit comes to such a man and works at his heart to convert and save him, then this man receives none of these things which the Holy Spirit, through the Word, tells him and brings him; they are all foolishness to him, neither **can** he know these things, that is, recognize in them the truth of God. For they must be discerned, or judged, spiritually, that is, with a mind which the Holy Spirit has, by the Word, born again, made spiritual. Only we Christians, who already are converted, "have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God." I Cor. 2: 12.

The Apostle Paul, by the Holy Spirit, writes furthermore: "Even when we were dead in sins, (God) hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved)." Eph. 2: 5. Such as were spiritually dead, God has spiritually quickened; and that must, indeed, be grace, pure and unadulterated grace. We Christians were spiritually dead. God has quickened us, converted and saved us. Thus we have been converted and saved by grace,

wholly and solely by the grace of God. For, being dead, **we** surely could not contribute anything toward our quickening, could neither do nor cease doing, "abstain" from doing, anything. Being dead, we surely could not "properly conduct" ourselves toward such grace of God, which came to us and worked at our hearts through God's Word and Holy Spirit. There was nothing in us but death, putrid, spiritual death. Do we know what that is? There is no mean, no intermediate state, between death and life. A man is either dead or alive. His life may be at a very low ebb: he may be half dead, as it were. But still he is alive. Death cannot be said to be at a low ebb. Where a man is dead he is dead. There is no mean, no intermediate state, between spiritual death and spiritual life. A man is either spiritually dead or spiritually alive. His spiritual life may, as yet, be a mere spark, or it may be at a very low ebb; yet the man is spiritually alive. Spiritual death cannot be said to be a mere spark or to be at a very low ebb. When a man is spiritually dead he is spiritually dead. There is no mean, no intermediate state, between non-conversion and conversion. A man is either unconverted or converted. His convertedness may be a mere spark as yet, or it may be at a very low ebb; yet he is in a state of conversion, he is converted. A man's unconvertedness cannot be a mere spark or be at a low ebb. When a man is unconverted he is unconverted. There is no mean, no intermediate state, between faith and unbelief. Either a man has faith or he is an unbeliever. A man's faith may be a mere spark as yet, or may be at a very low ebb. Notwithstanding, he is a believer. Unbelief cannot be a mere spark or be at a very low ebb. When a man is an unbeliever he is an unbeliever. That God quickened us, therefore, when we were dead, spiritually dead; that God converted us when we were unconverted; that He made us believers when we were unbelievers: that was done wholly and entirely, solely and

alone, by God's grace. We did absolutely nothing to bring this about, neither did we, unto this end, abstain from doing anything. We surely did not "properly conduct" ourselves, neither had we any power so to do. We were dead. And when we were dead God quickened us. In like manner St. Paul writes to us Christians, Col. 2: 12: "Ye are risen . . . through the faith of the operation of God." From spiritual death are we risen. How? "Through the faith." The very first spark of spiritual life was faith itself. And of whose operation, or working, is faith? God's, unqualifiedly. God's, God's alone.

Christ says to Nicodemus: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Here the Lord Jesus solemnly declares: Except a man be born again, except he be converted, except he become a believer, and thus be brought into the Kingdom of God, he cannot see the Kingdom of God, he cannot have any conception or understanding of the Kingdom of God, nor of aught that pertains thereto. Hence, prior to the new birth, prior to a man's conversion and faith, prior to his actual entrance into the Kingdom of God, there surely cannot be found in him any such thing as "proper conduct," as abstainment from any kind of resistance against the grace of God, when such grace comes to him and works at his heart in order to convert him and usher him into the Kingdom of God. Least of all is he capable of a free self-determination in favor of the grace and Kingdom of God. The very opposite of all this is present with him. Listen! The Lord Jesus says: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." John 3: 6. As long as a man is not born of the Spirit, as long as he is not converted, as long as he has not been made a believer and brought into the Kingdom of God: he is flesh. What does that mean? It means he is a natural man, unconverted, unbelieving, without the Kingdom of God. How is he then minded?

How is every thought and imagination of his heart? What is his mind? Yea, what is the mind of the flesh? It is a carnal mind. A man who is flesh, as yet, is carnally minded. His mind, every thought and imagination of his heart, is carnal. What manner of mind, what manner of thought and imagination, is that? The Apostle Paul says by the Holy Spirit: "The carnal mind," the mind, the thought, the imagination, of the flesh, of the natural, unconverted, unbelieving man, of the man who has not yet entered the Kingdom of God, "is **enmity against God.**" Rom. 8: 7. The "flesh" hates God and everything that is Godlike and spiritual. It cannot do otherwise. Flesh and spirit are absolute and irreconcilable contrasts, they are opposites. And now when the grace of God, through His Word and Holy Spirit, comes to a man that is flesh, in order to convert him, what then? Aye, what then? Will the flesh then "properly conduct" itself, will it "abstain from wilful and wanton resistance," will it "freely," of its own accord, "decide for," and choose, salvation? Salvation? The Spirit-Word? The natural man, the flesh, receiveth not this thing. It is foolishness unto him, neither can he know it; for it is spiritually discerned; he is enmity against it, he hates it; for it is spiritual, of God's spirit, it is of God, and he hates God. And the closer God, through His Word and Holy Spirit, comes to the man who is flesh, the stronger, the mightier, the more powerful His efforts to convert and save him: the more, the worse, the more furiously, the more wilfully and wantonly that man will resist God and be enmity against Him and His grace and Word of grace concerning the salvation in Christ—till, till, till he is overcome, till he is born of the Spirit, till he is converted, made a believer, and ushered into the Kingdom of God.

Thus the matter stands according to the Word of God. The Synodical Conference is right. Conversion to God and faith in Jesus Christ are wrought wholly and solely

by the grace of God. Man contributes nothing toward his own conversion, neither can he do so. A man's conversion is in no wise dependent upon himself, it is dependent upon God alone. And all this talk by the leaders, or rather misleaders, of the Ohio and Iowa Synods about "proper conduct," "abstainment from wilful and wanton resistance," about "free self-determination" on the part of man prior to his actual conversion—all this talk is the merest rank of quibbling theological quacks who will not follow the Word of God alone, but allow themselves to be governed by all manner of human considerations and by reason and philosophy called logic.

What say the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church concerning this matter? They say: "Our doctrine, faith and confession are as follows, namely, that in spiritual and divine things the intellect, heart and will of the unregenerate man cannot, in any way, by their own natural powers, understand, believe, accept, think, will, begin, effect, do, work or concur in working anything, but they are entirely dead to good, and corrupt; so that in man's nature, since the fall, there is, before regeneration, not the least spark of spiritual power remaining still present, by which, of himself, he can prepare himself for God's grace, or accept the offered grace, or, for and of himself, be capable of it, or apply or accommodate himself thereto, or by his own powers be able of himself, as of himself, to aid, do, work or concur in working anything for his conversion, either entirely, or in half, or in even the least or most inconsiderable part, but he is the servant (and slave) of sin (John 8: 34; Eph. 2: 2; II Tim. 2: 26). Hence the natural free will, according to its perverted disposition and nature, is strong and active only with respect to what is displeasing and contrary to God." (F. C. II, par. 7. Jacobs' Ed.) They say: "Free will, from its own natural powers, not only cannot work or co-work as to anything for its own conversion, righteousness and

salvation, or follow, believe or assent to the Holy Ghost, who through the Gospel offers him grace and salvation, but rather from its innate, wicked, perverse nature it hostilely resists God and His will, unless it be enlightened and controlled by God's Spirit." (Ibid., par. 18.) They say: "In spiritual and divine things, which pertain to the salvation of the soul, man is like a pillar of salt, like Lot's wife; yea, like a log and a stone, like a lifeless statue, which uses neither eyes nor mouth, neither sense nor heart. For man neither sees nor perceives the fierce and terrible wrath of God on account of sin and death (resulting from it), but he continues **even knowingly and willingly** in his security, and thereby falls into a thousand dangers, and finally into eternal death and damnation; and no prayers, no supplications, no admonitions, yea, also no threats, no reprimands are of any avail; yea, **all teaching and preaching are lost upon him, until he is enlightened, converted and regenerated by the Holy Ghost** . . . not from its" (his) "own natural [active or] effective skill, aptness or capacity (for the nature of man is perverse enmity against God), but from pure grace, through the gracious, efficacious working of the Holy Ghost." (Ibid., par. 20-22.) They say: **"But before man is enlightened, converted, regenerated, renewed and led by the Holy Ghost,** he can of himself and of his own natural powers begin, work or co-operate as to anything in spiritual things, and in his own conversion or regeneration, as little as a stone or a block or clay. For although he can control the outward members and hear the Gospel, and to a certain extent meditate upon it and discourse concerning it, as is to be seen in the Pharisees and hypocrites; nevertheless he regards it foolishness, and cannot believe it, **and also in this case he is worse than a block, in that he is rebellious and hostile to God's will, if the Holy Ghost be not efficacious in him, and do not kindle and work in him faith and other virtues pleasing to God, and obedience.**

For the Holy Scriptures, besides, refer conversion, faith in Christ, regeneration renewal, and all that belongs to their efficacious beginning and completion, not to the human powers of the natural free will, either entirely or half, or the least or most inconsiderable part; but ascribe them **in solidum,** i. e., **entirely alone to the divine working and the Holy Ghost.**" (Ibid., par. 24, 25.) They say: "Few receive the Word and follow it; the greatest number despise the Word and will not come to the wedding (Matth. 22: 3 sqq.) **The cause for this contempt for the Word is not God's knowledge [or predestination], but the perverse will of man,** who rejects or perverts the means and instrument of the Holy Ghost, which God offers him through the call, and resists the Holy Ghost, **who wishes to be efficacious, and works through the Word,** as Christ says (Matth. 23: 37): **"How often would I have gathered thee together, and ye would not."** Therefore many receive the Word with joy but afterward fall away again (Luke 8: 13). But the cause is not as though God were unwilling to grant grace for perseverance to those in whom He has begun the good work, for this is contrary to St. Paul (Phil. 1: 6); but the cause is that they wilfully turn away again from the holy commandment [of God], grieve and exasperate the Holy Ghost, implicate themselves again in the filth of the world and garnish again the habitation of the heart for the devil; with them the last state is worse than the first (II Pet. 2: 10, 20; Eph. 4: 30; Heb. 10: 26; Luke 11: 25). (F. C., XI, par. 41, 42.) They say: "In addition to that hitherto mentioned which has been revealed in Christ concerning this, God has still kept secret and concealed much concerning this mystery, and reserved it alone for His wisdom and knowledge. **Concerning this we should not investigate, nor indulge our thoughts, nor reach conclusions, nor inquire curiously, but should adhere [entirely] to the revealed Word of God.** This admonition is in the highest degree necessary." "We

see . . . **that one is hardened, blinded, given over to a reprobate mind, while another, who is indeed in the same guild, is again converted.**" (Ibid., par. 52, 57.)

That the Lutheran Confessions, even as the Word of God, are on the side of the Synodical Conference in this controversy is as plain as day. And just as plain it is that the Ohio and Iowa Synods are in apposition to both.

And now we can easily understand the controversy about the doctrine of **Election.**

Respecting this doctrine, the Synodical Conference and the Ohio and Iowa Synods do not agree in a single point.

What the Synodical Conference says concerning Election may be summed up briefly, yet clearly and distinctly, in the following words:

The Synodical Conference says: As the Holy Ghost has, in this my day, called me, poor sinner, by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith, so that now, by faith, I am in blissful possession of the forgiveness of sins, which God offers, or am justified, and serve God without fear all the days of my life, waiting only for the life eternal; as God will, by the Gospel and Holy Spirit, surely perform the good work that He has begun in me, until the day of Jesus Christ, even as He has promised; as God has begun such work in me wholly and solely by grace for Jesus' sake and from no other, or third cause, without any merit or worthiness in me, and entirely without any co-operation on my part, or any proper conduct toward the grace of God when this grace came to me; and as God will perform such good work in me until the day of Jesus Christ wholly and solely by grace for Jesus' sake, without any merit or worthiness in me, yea, entirely regardless of the fact that I now, by faith, do properly conduct myself toward His grace—for it is He that worketh in me both to will and to do according to His good pleasure (Phil. 2: 13); and as God has done, is doing, and will do, to the entire true Christian

Church on earth what He has done, is doing, and will do to me—

Even so God has, before the foundation of the world, yea, from eternity, chosen, me, poor sinner, and hereunto ordained me, that the Holy Ghost should call me by the Gospel, enlighten me with His gifts, sanctify and keep me in the true faith, so that, by such faith, I should be and remain in blissful possession of the forgiveness of sins, or of justification, and should most certainly inherit eternal life. In fine, God has chosen and irrevocably ordained, or predestinated, me unto faith in Jesus Christ and unto eternal bliss, and He has done so wholly and solely by grace, for Jesus' sake, and from no other, or third, cause, without any merit or worthiness in me, and entirely regardless of my lack of co-operation or proper conduct toward His grace, to come to me in time, also without allowing His actions to be determined by His foreknowledge of the fact that after my conversion I would, by faith, exercise proper conduct toward His grace, seeing it was to be He Himself who should work and maintain this conduct in me, and seeing, therefore, such conduct was to be, not the cause, but the effect, of my election, even as was my conversion. And as God has chosen and irrevocably ordained, or predestinated, me into faith in Jesus Christ and unto eternal bliss, even so He has chosen and irrevocably predestinated every individual person in the whole true Christian Church on earth.

Yes, what God, in time, does to us Christians through conversion and justification, this very thing He has, from eternity, purposed to do even unto us and has chosen and predestinated us hereto. What God does to us in time and what He, in eternity, purposed to do unto us and whereunto He has chosen and predestinated us—this is one and the self-same thing. It must needs be so. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." Yea, from eternity. Acts 15: 18. There is no

time with God. He is simply eternal. His actions are one even as He is one.

This is what the Synodical Conference teaches. The Ohio Synod opposes this doctrine most vehemently and in a most thorough-going manner. And the Iowa Synod shares Ohio's position.

The Ohio Synod says: "That the elect were predestinated into eternal life **in view of faith** (Latin: **intuitu fidei).**" (Synodical Proceedings, 1881, p. 39.)

Thus, with Ohio, the grace of God and the merit of Christ are not the only causes of election and predestination unto eternal life. Ohio assigns a third cause, namely, **faith.** And Ohio treats faith as the ultimate and really decisive cause of election, as the real determining factor. Why? Because—so they argue—the grace of God and the merit of Christ extend over all men, without any exception, while faith is found only in the elect and makes them alone pleasing to God and thus distinguishes them from all other men. And faith, according to the doctrine of Ohio, distinguishes the elect from all other men for the following reason: because it is not wholly and solely a fruit of the grace of God, working through the Word and Holy Spirit, but is also a result of the proper conduct of the elect toward the grace of God coming to them through the Word and Holy Spirit. For, says Ohio, if faith were solely a fruit of the grace of God, working through the Word and Holy Spirit and were not, at the same time a result of the proper conduct of the elect toward the grace of God, coming to them through the Word and Holy Spirit, then one could not account for the fact that God does not make all men believers and has not chosen all. Thus, according to Ohio, the faith of the elect is not the **result,** but the **cause,** of their predestination to eternal life. Or, to put it more clearly, more to the point, and more truthfully: According to Ohio, **the proper conduct** of the elect toward the grace of God, coming to them through

the Word and Holy Spirit, is not the result, but the **cause**, of their election and predestination to eternal life.

Such is the "in view of faith" of the Ohio, and also of the Iowa Synod: God, they declare, foresaw from eternity who of us sons of men would properly conduct themselves toward the grace of God, coming to them through His Word and Holy Spirit, and would suffer such grace to lead them to, and keep them in, the faith, and those who God foresaw would so conduct themselves, those, according to Ohio and Iowa, God elected and predestinated.

Yea, they even go so far as to teach that a man is not elected of God until he believes; if he falls away from the faith he is no longer elected; if he returns to the faith he is re-elected. **(The Present Doctrine of the Missouri Synod, etc.** By Allwardt.)

According to the doctrine of Ohio, and likewise of Iowa, God, in electing and predestinating men to eternal life, merely records their faith and awards eternal life to those who believe and continue in the faith. They say that in the so-called election of grace the words of Christ: "He that believeth shall be saved," are merely applied to certain individuals. But this conception, besides abolishing the real doctrine of Election, abolishes these words of Christ. For it makes faith a thing that "depends upon man and not upon God alone," a thing "whose cause must be sought solely and alone in man's decision." Is **that** the faith of which Christ speaks?

But the Ohioans and their associates have an idea that this is the only way to steer clear of Calvinism, that is, the false doctrine of the Reformed Church father, Calvin. They think that if one teaches that justifying and saving faith is wrought solely and alone by the grace of God through the Word and Holy Spirit and that faith is in no wise dependent upon man's proper conduct and self-determination, that faith is, therefore, not the cause but

the result of election—they think such teaching is Calvinism. And again and again they accuse the Synodical Conference of teaching Calvinism.

Now, we have already shown what Calvinism is, on page 75 of this book. One passage from a Calvinistic Confession we herewith quote again: "By the decree of God for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death." "As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath He by the eternal and most free purpose of His will foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemd by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit, working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only." (Westminster Confession of Faith, Ch. III, par. 3, 6.)

This is Calvinism.

The doctrine of the Synodical Conference has nothing in common with Calvinism.

The Synodical Conference altogether rejects the statement: "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death."

The Synodical Conference rejects the bare assertion that "God hath appointed the elect unto glory;" because both the election and the appointment of the elect unto glory were performed of God by grace, because of Christ's merit. The grace of God, which extends over all men and the merit of Christ, which avails for all, must be prominently mentioned as the cause of election and of the appointment of the elect unto glory.

Therefore the Synodical Conference rejects the entire statement: "As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he by the eternal and most free purpose of His will foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit, working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith unto salvation." For, according to this statement, Christ's redemptive work was performed only for the elect, only the elect are effectually called unto faith in Christ, the whole divine will of grace and salvation extends over the elect only; while, as a matter of fact, the redemption in Christ, the effectual call to faith in Christ, extended through God's Word and Holy Spirit, in fact, the whole divine will of grace and salvation, is for all men without exception.

The Synodical Conference therefore rejects and condemns the statement: "Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified and saved, but the elect only."

Thus we see the Synodical Conference has nothing in common with Calvinism.

Now, according to the Word of God, who has the right doctrine of Election, the Synodical Conference or the Ohio and Iowa Synods?

The Apostle Paul, speaking by the Holy Spirit, says to us Christians and children of God: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." Eph. 1: 3-6. The Apostle here praises

God—ah, we knew Him—the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the blessing, even all spiritual and heavenly blessing, which He has bestowed upon us through Christ. Of Christ, the Savior of us and of all the world, he makes prominent mention as of the fountain from which all blessings flow. In Christ all that blessing which God bestowes upon us is treasured up, held in store, kept in readiness. And now the Apostle mentions the first blessing which God has conferred upon us Christians through Christ. This first blessing God conferred upon us "before the foundation of the world," from eternity. What blessing is that? It is this: God has elected us, chosen us, chosen us out of the human race, chosen us for Himself, to be His own, "in Him," in Christ. But let us proceed. **Whereunto** has God chosen us for Himself? Hereunto, "that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." We, being His own, were to be different, entirely different, from those who are alienated and enemies (to God) in their mind by wicked works (Col. 1: 21), we were to walk before His countenance, the countenance of our God, were to serve Him without fear in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life (Luke 1: 74. 75), in love, in divinely begotten love, toward Him, our God, and toward our brethren. Yes, God has chosen us hereto, "having predestinated," "foreordained," us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself." From eternity God, through Christ, has chosen and predestinated us to be His dear children by Jesus Christ. Have we Christians become such? Yes, praise be to God, we have become His dear children through Jesus Christ. How did we become God's dear children through Jesus Christ? Why, by **faith** in Jesus Christ, as the Apostle says to us Christians: "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Gal. 3: 26. To say that God has chosen and predestinated us "unto the adoption of children **by Jesus Christ** to Himself is to say that God has

chosen and predestinated us **unto faith** in Jesus Christ. Yes, God has from eternity chosen and predestinated us for Christ's sake unto faith in Jesus Christ and thus unto the adoption of children to Himself and thus to the inheritance of eternal life. What a blessing that is! What caused God to do this to us poor, miserable sinners? This has been stated repeatedly: by Christ, for Christ's sake. Can we mention another cause? Yes, Paul mentions it: "According to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace." God has from eternity chosen and irrevocably predestinated us Christians unto faith in Jesus Christ and thus unto the adoption of children to Himself and thus to the inheritance of eternal life for Christ's sake and—according to the entirely free good pleasure of His will, that the glory of His grace might be thereby praised. So these are the two causes of our election: **the merit of Christ** and **the grace of God.** Was there another, a third cause? Did God, perhaps, see, foresee anything in us that moved Him to choose **us?** No. Paul says never a word about any such third cause. On the contrary, such third cause is utterly precluded by the words: "According to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace." O Ohio and Iowa! Does not all that we have, and all that we are as Christions, spring from God's eternal election and predestination, and does not this spring solely from the grace of God and the merit of Christ?

The Apostle Paul writes furthermore by the Holy Spirit: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Rom. 8: 28-30.

Let us consider this passage.

To them that love God all things work together for good. The greatest good there is is perseverance in the faith and eternal bliss. Now, who are they that love God and to whom all things work together for good? They are "they that are called according to His purpose," that is, that are **converted** according to God's purpose. "Called" means the same as converted. Where, as in the present case, the Bible speaks of that calling by which men are called to the kingdom of God, "called" always means called sucessfully, hence, converted. Only in two places in the New Testament, where it says: "Many be called, but few chosen," (Matth. 20: 16; 22: 14) it is not so. But here it surely is so. For it says here that the called love God and that all things work together for their good. This surely applies to converted Christians only. And "according to His purpose" are these called, converted. God purposed to convert these people and to make of them such as love Him and to make all things work together for good to them and hence to save them.

Now, the Apostle explains this purpose of God, that we may know exactly what is meant by it. The Apostle says: "For whom he did foreknow"—

Let us pause here for a moment. What does that mean: "foreknow?" We have in mind, of course, the Greek word which in the English Bible is translated: foreknow. When in the Bible, **men** are said to "foreknow," the meaning of this word is: to know from previous acquaintance (Acts 26: 5), or: to know beforehand what is going to happen because the Word of God foretells it (II Pet. 3: 17.). But when **God** is said to "foreknow," the meaning of the word invariably is: to choose beforehand and foreordain (I Pet. 1: 20; Acts 2: 23; I Pet. 1: 2).

Now let us continue where we left off. The Apostle now explains this purpose of God that we may know exactly what is meant by it. The Apostle says: "For whom

he (God) did foreknow" (and choose beforehand) "he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren." The elect God did predestinate that, like Christ, they should pass through tribulation to glory and that Christ should be their first born brother and their Chieftain. The Apostle continues: "Moreover whom he (God) did predestinate (unto glory), them he also called (converted): and whom he called (converted), them he also justified (by faith in Jesus Christ): and whom he justified, them he also glorified," saved. Yes, the Apostle is here speaking of the elect. Hence he also says in the third verse following this quotation: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?"

And every sincere Christian ought to see and confess that all that a Christian is and has, from his conversion to his attainment of everlasting bliss, faith and perseverance in the faith included, is the result of God's election and predestination, that is of His purpose respecting Christians, and hence must be attributed solely to the grace of God in Jesus Christ. And every Christian ought to see that Ohio and Iowa commit themselves to false doctrine when they say that, on the contrary, election and predestination unto salvation are determined by faith, foreseen of God, by a faith which, together with salvation itself, is not dependent upon God alone, but, in a certain sense, upon man himself, namely, upon man's proper conduct.

In precisely the same way, St. Peter speaks of this matter when, in the beginning of his First Epistle, he writes: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus Christ." I Pet. 1: 1-2. St. Peter here calls the Christians,

scattered throughout the earth, elect according to the election, or pre-election, of God the Father, and says that they are elected, or chosen, "unto obedience," that is, unto the obedience of faith, unto faith itself, and unto "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," that is, unto justification by faith. And he says that God carries out such election, puts it into effect, "through sanctification of the Spirit," that is, through that operation of the Holy Spirit whereby He leads men to believe and sanctifies and keeps them in the faith.

And again St. Paul writes: "God hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." II Tim. 1: 9. St. Paul here tells us, "in words which the Holy Ghost teacheth," that God has saved us. And how did God save us? He called us, converted us, made us believers. And how does it come that, of all men, **we** were thus converted and saved? According to what principle did He thus save us? Not according to our works, not according to our doings and conduct, as if that had been better than the doings and conduct of other people? According to what principle did He convert and save us? "According to his own purpose and grace," according to His own gracious purpose. For whose sake did God conceive such purpose, give us such grace? For Christ Jesus' sake? When did God conceive this purpose, grant us this grace? "Before the world began." Now read once more, on pages 90 ff, what the Ohio Synod says.

Furthermore, the same Apostle writes: "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." II Thess. 2: 13. 14. This passage is very similar

to the one from St. Peter which we discussed a few lines above. God has from the beginning, from eternity, chosen us Christians to salvation. And this salvation was to be given us through sanctification of the Spirit, namely, through belief of the truth. And God has actually converted us by the Gospel. In this manner God carries out His decree of election respecting us and leads us to salvation.

In the night in which our Lord Jesus Christ was betrayed, He said to His disciples: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." John 15: 6. Thus the Lord says to His eminent Apostles! Notwithstanding, the Iowa Synod allows one of her leading members the freedom to write: "One thing is certain: if God has foreordained but a limited number of men to eternal life, He must have been prompted to do so either by an absolute decree of election on His part, and then it was His sovereign will to endow none but these with faith"—this is **not** what the writer means to teach; for this is wicked Calvinism—**"or by man's own choosing (Entscheidung), which He foresaw."** And this is the doctrine of the Iowa writer, Professor George Fritschel. (Brobst. **Theol. Monatshefte,** 1872, p. 32.) The Ohio Synod teaches substantially the same thing.

But St. Paul writes, speaking by the Holy Ghost: "So then it is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." Rom. 9: 16.

And the Holy Spirit moves St. Luke to say: "When the Gentiles heard this they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: **and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."** Acts 13: 48. And now comes the Ohio Synod, and the Iowa Synod, and says that faith is a **cause** of election and predestination, that God elected and ordained those unto eternal life whose faith, or, strictly speaking, whose "proper conduct" and "free self-determination" (to accept God's grace) "He foresaw."

What say the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church?

They say: **First,** the **distinction** between the eternal **foreknowledge** of God and the eternal **election** of His children to eternal salvation, is to be accurately observed. For foreknowledge or prevision, i. e., that God sees and knows everything before it happens, which is called God's **foreknowledge** [prescience], **extends to all creatures, good and bad;** namely, that He foresees and foreknows everything that is or will be, that is occuring or will occur, whether it be good or bad, since before God all things, whether they be past or future, are manifest and present. Thus it is written (Matth. 10: 29): 'Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.' And (Ps. 139: 16): 'Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned when as yet there were none of them.' Also (Isa. 37: 28): 'I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me.'

But the eternal election of God, or predestination, i. e., God's appointment to salvation, pertains not at the same time to the godly and the wicked, but only to the children of God, who were elected and appointed to eternal life before the foundation of the world was laid, as Paul says (Eph. 1: 4. 5.): 'He hath chosen us in him, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ.'

The **foreknowledge** of God (prescience) **forsees and foreknows also that which is evil,** but not in such a manner as though it were God's gracious will that evil should happen. But all that the perverse, wicked will of the devil and of men purposes and desires to do, and will do, God sees and knows before; and his prescience, i. e., foreknowledge, so observes its order also, even in wicked acts or works, that to the evil, which God does not will its limit

and measure are fixed by God, how far it should go and how long it should last, when and how He would hinder and punish it; yet all this God so rules that it must redound to the glory of the divine name and to the salvation of His elect; and the godless, on that account, must be put to confusion.

"Moreover, the beginning and **cause** of the evil is not God's **foreknowledge** (for God does not **procure** and effect or **work** that which is evil, neither does He **help** or **promote** it); but the wicked, perverse will of the devil and of men [is the cause of the evil], as it is written (Hos. 13: 9): 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help.' Also (Ps. 5: 4): 'Thou are not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness.'

"But the eternal election of God not only foresees and foreknows the salvation of the elect, but it also, from the gracious will and pleasure of God in Christ Jesus, a cause which procures, works, helps and promotes what pertains thereto; upon this [divine predestination] also our salvation is so founded that 'the gates of hell cannot prevail against it' (Matth. 16: 18). For it is written (John 10: 28): 'Neither shall any man pluck My sheep out of My hand.' And again (Acts 13: 48): 'And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.'" (F. C., Art. Part II, Art XI, par. 3-8.)

This will fully suffice to show that the Synodical Conference has the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church on its side, even as it has the Bible on its side, while the Ohio Synod and the Iowa Synod run counter to both.

Before proceeding to the next chapter we deem it necessary to add a few remarks.

1. When the doctrine of Holy Writ concerning the election and predestination of the children of God to eternal life is expounded, the question is frequently asked: How about those people whom God did **not** elect? **Why**

did God not elect them? Could He not have elected them as well as the others?

We reply as follows:

The Holy Scriptures teach solely and exclusively that we Christians, who truly believe in Jesus Christ and are saved by such faith, were graciously, for Christ's sake, from eternity, chosen and ordained of God unto eternal life and to all that pertains thereto, and that, according to His revealed Word, leads thereto. The Holy Scriptures teach, therefore, that our conversion, faith, sanctification, perseverance in faith, and eternal life—that all this is the result of such eternal and gracious election and predestination of God. And this Holy Scripture doctrine "establishes very effectually the article that we are justified and saved without all works and merits of ours, purely out of grace, alone for Christ's sake. For before the ages of the world, before we were born, yea, before the foundation of the world was laid, when we indeed could do nothing good, we were according to **God's purpose** chosen out of grace in Christ to salvation (Rom. 9: II Tim. 1: 9). All opinions and erroneous doctrines concerning the powers of our natural will are thereby overthrown, because God in His counsel, before the ages of the world, decided and ordained that He Himself, by the power of His Holy Ghost would produce and work in us, through the Word, everything that pertains to our conversion." (F. C. II, Ch. XI, par. 43, 44.) This is the doctrine of the Bible.

But the Holy Scripture confine themselves to teaching an election of **grace** and a **gracious** predestination of God. They are concerned, therefore, with those people only who believe and are saved. That God has **not elected** some people, has **not** ordained some people, to salvation, the Bible never and nowhere states. Such expressions, yea, such conceptions, are foreign to the Bible. Hence it is not in accord with the Bible, it is improper to put the question that is agitating one's mind, thus: How about those

whom God has not chosen? Why did He not choose them? Could He not have chosen them as well as the others? And it is not in accord with the Bible, it is improper to search for and offer an answer to such questions. We repeat: Such expressions, such conceptions, as these: "Some people God did not choose," "Some people God did not ordain to salvation"—such conceptions as these are unknown to the Bible. For such things you will search the Bible in vain, even as you will search it in vain for the doctrine that God has chosen and ordained some people to damnation.

"But," you will probably interpose, "does not Christ say: 'Many are called, but few are chosen'?" (Matth. 22: 14.) Yes, He does. And we answer with the Confessions of our Church and in keeping with the Bible:

"That, however, 'many are called, few are chosen,' does not mean that God is unwilling that all should be saved, but the reason is that they either do not at all hear God's Word, but wilfully despise it, close their ears and harden their hearts, and in this manner foreclose the ordinary way to the Holy Ghost, so that He cannot effect His work in them, or when it is heard, they consider it of no account, and do not heed it. For this [that they perish] not God or his election, but their wickedness, is responsible (II Pet. 2; 1 sqq.; Luke 11: 49-52; Heb. 12: 25 sq.)." (F. C., Part. I, Ch. XI, par. 12.)

2. "But," say the Iowa Synod and the Ohio Synod, "one thing is certain: if God has foreordained but a limited number of men to eternal life, He must have been prompted to do so, either by an absolute decree of election on His part, and then it was His sovereign will to endow none but these with faith, or by man's own choosing, which He foresaw." And we are asked: What do you say to that?

We say that **our** reason, perverted and overcurious as it is, and always rebellious against the Word of God, says precisely the same thing. **Our** reason sees no other way

out of the difficulty, **our** reason is ever ready to "reply against God." But we hear the Holy Spirit say: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" Rom. 9: 20. And we silence our reason and believe with childlike faith what God says in the Bible, and we leave it to Divine Wisdom to reconcile what seems to be at variance and to disentangle what seems to be hopelessly entangled. And we bow down and worship and say: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen." Rom. 11: 33-36.

3. St. Paul writes: "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." Rom. 15: 4. St. Paul, with these words, refer to the Scriptures such as they were in his day, he refers to the Old Testament. Now we also have the New Testament. And we may with perfect propriety apply these words to the New Testament also. The doctrine of Election is indeed set forth in the Old Testament, but the New Testament presents this doctrine more fully and more clearly. And we should learn from what is written about Election that by such learning we may have patience, comfort, and hope.

But tell me, pray, how can I have patience, comfort and hope, through the doctrine of Election, except that I know that I—I—I am one of the elect? And how can I know this thing?

Our election "is not to be investigated in the secret counsel of God." How could we investigate it there? We must also remember that "we should judge concern-

ing this our election to eternal life neither from reason nor from the Law of God." This "would lead either into a dissipated dissolute epicurian life, or into despair, and would excite in the heart of men pernicious thoughts (and such thoughts cannot be effectually guarded against as long as they follow their own reason), so that they think to themselves: "If God has elected me to salvation, I cannot be condemned, although I do whatever I will." And again: "If I am not elected to eternal life, it matters not what good I do; for my efforts are nevertheless all in vain."

Where must I seek and obtain the knowledge and assurance of my election? It "is to be sought in the Word of God, where it is also revealed." It "must be learned alone from the Holy Gospel concerning Christ. (F. C., Part I, Ch. XI, par. 5, 9, 10.)

"How am I to understand that?" you ask. You know from the Word of God, the holy Gospel, that God, in His grace, for Jesus' sake, has had mercy upon all men and that for Jesus' sake He is willing to justify, sanctify, and save all men by faith in Him. Wherefore He has commanded the Gospel to be preached to all men and earnestly wills that all men believe the same, receive justification by such faith, thereupon lead a godly life, and finally obtain eternal bliss; wherefore He also at all times grants His Holy Spirit in the Gospel and the Holy Spirit works with divine power at the hearts of all that hear it, to perform all these things in their hearts.

You know furthermore from the Word of God, from the Holy Gospel, that all they who, in time, have died, all who are still living, and all who are yet to live and die, as such true children of God—that all they were, by the grace of God, for Christ's sake, from eternity, chosen and irrevocably ordained that by His Word and Holy Spirit they should be called and enlightened, converted and endowed with faith, thereupon be sanctified in the true faith and

preserved unto eternal salvation; all of which He, in keeping with this His eternal and divine purpose, has, in time, performed in His elect, is performing, and will, in future time, perform.

And you also know by the Word of God, by the Holy Gospel: that "many are called, few are chosen," does not mean that God is unwilling that all should be saved, but the reason is that they either do not at all hear God's Word, but wilfully despise it, close their ears and harden their hearts, and in this manner foreclose the ordinary way to the Holy Ghost, so that He cannot effect His work in them, or, when it is heard, they consider it of no account, and do not heed it. For this [that they perish] not God or his election, but their wickedness is responsible. (II Pet. 2: 1 sqq.; Luke 11: 49-52; Heb. 12: 25 sq.)

Now, if you would ascertain that you, even you, are chosen, if you would be assured of this thing, take the Holy Gospel in hand and behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world, your own sin included, and hear how God calls every man to the saving grace which is in this Lamb. Resist not the Holy Spirit, who, by means of this Gospel, is drawing you with gracious divine power toward this saving grace; but believe with whole-hearted faith in your Savior Jesus Christ, rejoice in the righteousness which you have in Him, glorify God with a new obedience and with a godly life and conversation, war against sin, that still dwells within you and would unnerve you for the fray, and meanwhile trust in the assuring promise of God that He will perform the good work which He has begun in you, until the day of Jesus Christ. Wherefore be patient under the cross and hope with cheerfulness and with a longing that brooks no doubt, for the glory of eternal life, which God, who lieth not, will certainly give you. Hereupon ponder the wonderful Gospel tidings that God has ordained His elect to

the glory of eternal life and has at the same time conceived the immutable purpose, has determined, to lead them to such glory by calling and converting them by His Gospel and Holy Spirit, justifying them through faith in Jesus Christ, sanctifying them in such faith, and giving them strength to war against, and overcome, sin, making them patient under the cross, making all things work together for their good, and filling them with a longing for eternal life. **And then say:** O my Lord God, I am in the very way by which Thou leadest Thine elect to eternal glory. Thou hast done all those things to me which, according to Thine eternal purpose, Thou wilt in time do to them whom Thou hast ordained to eternal glory! **I am of the number of Thy chosen ones! I am one of Thine elect!** God would have you address Him thus without indulging a single doubt. And if doubts will arise, turn your eyes again and again toward your dear Savior Jesus Christ, and keep in the way which the Gospel points out to you and along which it is leading you. Thus you will soon behold anew the unclouded and eternal glory of the everlasting Sun of grace, you will again be assured of your election. That God that gave thee Christ and His Gospel, how shall He not have chosen thee, thou Christian!

This, all this, is the very thing that St. Peter means when he writes: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure," that is, to make it sure to yourselves, to assure yourselves of it. And he continues: "For if ye do these things," that is, if ye continue in the way of salvation (which he had pointed out in the foregoing), "ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." II Pet. 1: 10. 11.

4. The Bible doctrine of Election is the very deepest of the mysteries of the Christian faith. While anybody

can read this doctrine from a book, can absorb it, reproduce it, also cant and dispute about it, he alone can truly grasp it in spirit and truth and use it to real spiritual advantage who has come to hold the mystery of the entire Christian faith in a pure conscience (I Tim. 3: 9). All others who busy themselves with this doctrine will either sorely misuse it, or, as the example of the misleaders of the Ohio and Iowa Synods plainly shows, they will utterly deny it and shamefully revile it. Wherefore "do thou first concern thyself with Christ and the Gospel, that thou mayest know thy sin and His grace; thereupon mayest war with sin. . . . Then, when thou art come under the cross and tribulation, that will teach thee aright (concerning) election, how consoling it is. For apart from tribulation, cross, and pangs of death, one cannot contemplate election without harm and secret wrath against God. Wherefore Adam must be well mortified before he can stand this thing and drink this strong wine. Therefore beware lest thou drink wine while thou art yet a babe. Every doctrine has its proper place and time and season." Thus says Dr. Luther in his preface to the Book of Romans.

5. In another place Luther admonishes us that it is dangerous to speak of the things of God in words other than those which God Himself employs in the Bible. This is especially so with reference to the doctrine of Election. The Election of Grace is a thing so delicate, so holy, so divine, it is so entirely foreign to human reason and to all the faculties thereof, it lies, as stated in a previous remark, so utterly beyond the sure grasp of all but well matured spiritual minds, that we may not approach it save in chaste fear of the Lord, may not speak of and teach it save with lips that are steeped in chastity. Whoso, even though he be orthodox, speaks of the Election of Grace in more words than God employs in the Scriptures, or in a manner that deviates from God's and the Bible's, he is in danger

of speaking that which, while it may not be wrong exactly, still is not altogether seemly, does not measure up to the standard of the sound words of the Bible. And he is in danger of offending the weak and of giving adversaries occasion to revile the whole and true doctrine. The following may serve as an illustration: It is utterly beyond dispute that the elect will obtain eternal life and that beside the elect none will obtain it; as the Lord says of Israel: ". . . the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." Rom. 11: 7. Notwithstanding, if one should seek to bring this truth home to his hearers or readers by using the following words: "If the Lord has elected a man to salvation, he cannot be condemned, although he do whatever he will. And again, if a man is not elected to eternal life, it matters not what good he does; for his efforts are nevertheless all in vain"—if one were to use such or similar words to express a truth he would not be doing the right thing. On hearing that sentence, the weak in the faith would promptly forget all that went before and would fail to hear aught that followed after and would be sorely offended. And adversaries would seize upon that sentence, sever it entirely from the connection in which it occurred, hold it up to the gaze of all the world and cry: Here you see what those Missourians teach! And we herewith confess that when this controversy began expressions were here and there used on our side that were not altogether seemly and appropriate, chaste and carefully chosen.

6. We also confess that in earlier days some pastors of the Synodical Conference used the term that has since become the watchword of our adversaries, the term: God chose the elect **in view of faith.** How did these pastors come to use this term? Neither the Holy Scriptures nor the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church nor Dr. Luther nor yet Lutheran theologians of the days of the Reformation ever make use of this term.

Lutheran theologians of the seventeenth century coined this expression because they considered it a most effective weapon against Calvinism. Thus this expression, **in view of faith,** came to be a household word in the Lutheran Church of a later age. And in perfect good faith, with never a thought of false play, did the aforesaid pastors of the Synodical Conference make use of this term. Let it be remembered, however, that neither these pastors of the Synodical Conference nor the Lutheran theologians that coined this **in view of faith** so understood this expression as it was understood by later theologians and as it is now understood by the misleaders of the Ohio and Iowa Synods. They never intended to say that God chose (the elect) in view of their proper conduct toward His grace. On the contrary, they repudiated this notion in no uncertain terms and believed, taught, and confessed that faith is solely and entirely the work of God and is in no sense a result of man's co-operation with the Almighty.

However, seeing this expression: "God chose (the elect) in view of faith," is found neither in the Holy Scriptures nor in the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and seeing it is now become a shibboleth an emblem, of false doctrine and a banner 'neath which the unorthodox wage war against the orthodox, it were nothing short of a denial of God's truth if this expression were to be used or tolerated now in the orthodox Church. What good and loyal Christian would wish to bear the mark of the enemy on his forehead or on his right hand?

F. The Buffalo Synod.

This synod teaches Romanizing doctrine, that is, doctrine leaning toward popery, concerning the Church, the Office of the Keys, the Office of the Ministry, and Ordination or Consecration to the Ministry. But since this synod has lost whatever significance and value it may have possessed, we do not deem it worth while to give its false doctrine any further attention.

12. Where, at the present time, is the orthodox Church to be found; that is, the Church which not only holds the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church aloft in its constitution, but really believes, teaches, and confesses God's Word and Luther's doctrine?

In the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference and in all those church bodies in all lands which have and really proclaim the same belief, the same doctrine, and the same Confession.

We make this statement to the praise of God's grace, which has made us what we are, and with a lively sense of our own shortcomings.

IV. Concerning Our Synods.

1. What does the word Synod mean?

It means a company, or band, of travelers.

This word occurs but once in the Bible, Luke 2: 44. Here it is fitly rendered "company" in the English Bible.

2. What do we mean when we speak of our Synod?

We mean a number of orthodox congregations which, like a company of travelers, have banded themselves together to walk hand in hand through this present world, in the way in which the Word of God bids Christian congregations walk.

3. What is the benefit of such a synodical association?

The benefit is two-fold. In the first place, the Christian congregations, in this manner, help and advance one another in the way of Christian faith and living. In the second place, these same congregations are thus enabled to work at the unbuilding of the Kingdom of God both within and without their own boundaries with all the more power and effectiveness.

The former benefit is easily seen. The fire of a coal lying by itself is easily extinguished. A multitude of coals lying together keep one another aglow. A congregation walking alone may easily err from the heavenly way. A multitude of congregations walking together will hold, help, and advance one another in the way of Christian faith and living by means of doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness, mutually administered from the Bible in a fraternal Christian spirit.

The other benefit is no less apparent. A single coal will never cook a meal for you, but a heap of coals will. A single congregation will hardly manage to erect and equip and maintain orthodox schools for the training of ministers and teachers; to edit and publish orthodox papers and books for purposes of Christian education and edification; to carry on missions at home and abroad; or to practice Christian benevolence beyond its own confines. A number of congregations banded together can do all these things far more readily, as you will unhesitatingly admit.

4. What provisions has our Synod made to facilitate the carrying on of her work?

She has officers and annual meetings of delegates from her various congregations.

The officers which the Synod, at a meeting of her delegates, elects for a term of three years are the following: a president, one or more vice-presidents, a secretary, a treasurer, and a number of visiting pastors.

Every congregation belonging to the Synod is represented at the annual meetings by its pastor and one of its members, elected by the congregation. These two delegates are entitled to vote at said meetings. The Synod also requires all those of her pastors to attend these meetings who personally are members of the Synod, but whose congregations have not as yet united with her; also all professors, missionaries, and teachers of her parochial schools. None of these men, however, is entitled to vote, because the Synod is an association of congregations and not of officers of the congregations and of the Synod. If these men were entitled to vote the congregations would be under the government of individuals, so far as her joint work is concerned. And this is a thing which must not be in the Church of Jesus Christ.

When a Synod has grown to such proportions that it becomes necessary to divide the whole into several districts, or when several Synods unite to form a larger General Synod, each district and each individual Synod has its own officers and its own delegate meetings. Likewise, the General Synod, made up of such districts or individual Synods, has its general officers and meetings. These meetings occur every third year and in such year no district meetings and no meetings of individual Synods are held. The meetings of the General Synods are participated in in this manner: a greater or lesser number of congregations holding membership in the Synod unite in choosing one pastor and one lay member and the two thus chosen are delegated to said meeting. These alone are entitled to vote. In like manner the other members of the Synod send their representatives, which representatives, however, are not voting, but merely consulting, delegates.

The presidents, vice-presidents, and visiting pastors are required to see to it, each in his own appointed sphere, that in their Synod preaching and practice agree with the Word of God.

The conventions of delegates—and this applies to **all** such conventions, to those of the various districts and individual Synods as well as to those of the General Synod—are naturally above their officers in the aforementioned work of supervision. In order to maintain the purity and unity of the faith in the Synod, the meetings are devoted primarily to doctrinal discussions. It also devolves upon the delegates to deliberate upon, and determine, what shall be done to safeguard the welfare of the Synod and to insure the successful prosecution of her work.

The carrying out of the resolutions passed at the delegate meetings devolves upon the congregation. However, since the congregations are not under, but above, their own delegates, the resolutions of these men, in

Synod assembled, must be submitted to the congregations as counsels and requests, not as commands.

Synods with all their machinery of officers, conventions, etc., are not a divine but a human institution, created by Christian congregations in the interest of the Church, but withal a very salutary institution, as we have seen.

5. Does the orthodox Church of our country consist of but one Synod?

No, there are several orthodox Synods.

We also find orthodox Synods in lands other than our own. We mention the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Saxony and other states, the Danish Free Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Australia.

6. What is the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America?

This is a further association of independent orthodox Synods, formed for mutual preservation in the Christian faith and for concerted action in the upbuilding of God's Kingdom.

The Synodical Conference is made up at present of the General Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other states, the General Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, and other states, the Slavonian Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Pennsylvania and other states.

The Synodical Conference, too, has its officers and its delegate meetings, which are held every two years. To these conventions each Synod and each district of each individual Synod belonging to the aforementioned Synodical Conference sends a number of delegates chosen alike from the ministry and from the laity.

7. To what word of God should every Church belonging to the Synodical Conference, yea, the entire orthodox Church of all lands, give heed?

To the word: "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Eph. 4: 3-6.

8. What should this word induce every orthodox congregation to do?

To unite with some orthodox Synod.

V. How to Avoid Taking Offense at the Division of the Church.

1. Is the Church of Jesus Christ divided?

In her outward appearance, yes.

We furnished abundant testimony to that effect in the chapter on the Church. We must join in Luther's plaint:

"Fictions they teach with cunning art,
And lies of man's invention;
Not grounded on God's Word, their heart
Breeds naught but strange dissension;
One chooses this, another that,
Untold division they create,
Though saint-like in appearance."

2. What manner of offense is largely taken at this state of affairs?

A two-fold offense: In the first place, people think that the Holy Scriptures contain no such thing as infallible truth. In the second place, they think that for this reason it is immaterial what church a persons belongs to.

Concerning the first point, people say: Shall the Bible enable us to know just what the truth is in every point? Look at all the different sects! How widely they differ from one another! How relentlessly they make war upon one another! Yet each and every one of them refers us to the Bible. The Bible cannot be altogether clear. And if great and learned and pious men are so little agreed as

to what the Bible really teaches, how shall we unlearned laymen be able to understand these things?

Touching the second point, people say: Is there not but one God? And is He not worshipped in every church? Does not every church tell the people about Jesus Christ? There is no wickedness taught in any church. Every church teaches men to be pious and good and righteous. What difference, then, does it make what church one goes to? There is no real difference between the churches. The whole trouble lies with the learned theologians; they can't get along without wrangling.

Here we see what the offense leads to that people take at the divisions of the Church. It leads to uncertainty as to the will of God, indifference toward the Word of God, and a pitiful trusting in one's own righteousness.

3. What three things must we remember in order to escape such offense? What is the first thing to be remembered?

We must remember that the Church is divided, indeed, in its outward, visible appearance on earth, but not in reality and truth.

The Church, in reality, is the people of God on earth, the communion of saints, that is, the sum total of those whom the Holy Ghost, by the Gospel, calls, gathers, enlightens, sanctifies, and keeps with Jesus Christ, in the one true faith, all those who, while realizing that they are poor, lost, and condemned sinners, do truly believe in Jesus Christ, their Savior, and are, by such faith, become righteous in the sight of God, who serve God according to His Word, and finally inherit salvation; these people constitute the one Holy Christian Church, the whole and undivided Church of Christ on earth, the one flock of the one Shepherd, the one family and household of God. We know this, do we not? Well, knowing this, we also know

that the Church proper, the true invisible Church of God, is not divided. And we should take heed that we, in verity and truth, belong to this Church until our blessed departure, and that we use the means which God gives us unto this end, namely, the pure Word and Sacraments.

4. What is the second thing that we must remember to escape the above-mentioned offense?

We must remember that the divisions we perceive in the Church of Christ in its outward, visible appearance on earth are not due to any defect in the Word of God, but are due solely to the wickedness of men.

Hear a parable. Imagine five empty water buckets. A woman fills the five buckets with water, with good pure, crystalline spring water, all taken from the same spring, to be used for drinking and cooking purposes. Having drawn the water, she departs for a season. During her absence a villain espies the water and proceeds to wash himself in the first bucket, throws dirt into the second, spits into the third, and even strews poison into the fourth, while only the woman's return prevents him from polluting the water in the fifth. Just so the Word of God, given us in the Bible, is the good, pure, crystalline water of life. But in drawing this water and offering it for use men mix with it the filth and sputum, yea, and poison, of false doctrine drawn from their own rationalism and enthusiasm within their own hearts, and will palm this mixture off for the Word of God. The masses trust in the wisdom of their leaders and drink what these men offer them. And thus, in this fashion, divisions and offenses are caused in the Church. Do you, dear reader, abide by the pure, heavenly doctrine of Holy Writ, as found, through the gracious interposition of God, in the Confessions and in the preaching and teaching—agreeing with

such Confessions—of the Evangelical Lutheran Church? This heavenly doctrine is homely and simple, and all Christians, even the most simple, can grasp it, while all false doctrine requires many enticing words of man's wisdom to make it seem in harmony with the Bible.

5. What is the third thing that we must remember in order to shield ourselves against such offense?

That only the true doctrine of God, as proclaimed in the orthodox Church, is able to work true faith.

What? Don't you wish to have the true faith? Don't you wish to rely upon God's sure Word in life and death? Don't you wish to be able to say: This is what Thy Holy Word declares, O Lord; and in this we trust, on this we rely, and, doing so, defy the very devil? Can God put such confidence to shame? Verily, He cannot. But can you have such true faith, if, instead of the pure Word of God, you hear and receive and believe this Word with an admixture of lies? Do you relish being deceived in temporal and earthly matters? Why then invite deception where eternal and heavenly things are supposed to be offered? Oh, say not it is immaterial what church you go to, but adhere firmly and faithfully and exclusively to the orthodox Church, to the Church of the pure Word of God!

VI. Against Lodges.

1. What is a lodge?

A lodge is a secret, oath-bound brotherhood, composed of people of various standing, calling, and religious persuasion, and established for mutual exercise and advancement both as regards the body and as regards the soul.

Let us unfold this statement.

Before stating what a lodge **is,** let us first see what a lodge **is not.**

A lodge is not a governmental body, such as the house of representatives or the city council. Neither is it a political organization, such as a party club (Democratic Club, for example). Neither is a lodge a commercial organization, such as a present-day trust. Neither is it a trades-union, nor yet a society for the encouragement of the arts and sciences, such as a geographical society. A lodge is not a church organization, it is not a distinct religious party. Finally, a lodge is not a society for gymnastic exercise, entertainment, or pleasure, such as a **turner-bund,** a glee club, a baseball club.

No, a lodge is an organization of a different kind altogether. A lodge is a **brotherhood.** The members of a lodge give one another the right hand of fellowship, yea, of fidelity and brotherly love. And a lodge is an **oath-bound** brotherhood. Its members pledge their fidelity one to another with oaths that oftentimes are gruesome. (Witness the Freemasons' oath!) And a lodge is a **secret,** oath-bound brotherhood. What is transacted at its meet-

ings must be kept absolutely secret. And the **end and aim** of this secret, oath-bound brotherhood is: to uplift and advance its members, those it already has and those it hopes to gain, yea, to uplift and advance a steadily growing host of men—first in a material way. If the members of a lodge are laborers, their fellow members seek to aid them in obtaining good and profitable employment. If they are business men, their brethren patronize them. If they seek political office, they favor them at the polls. If they are in trouble, their brethren seek to help them out. If, by their own fault, they find themselves in embarrassment, their fellow members come to their relief. But the advantages the lodge seeks to dispense are not all of a material nature. The **souls** of men come in for a share of the blessings of lodgedom. Lodge members seek to ennoble one another. They purpose to reveal the truth, the very climax of religious truth, the truth that towers above all the various religions of the world—so they say; they purpose to plant this truth, and cause it to become firmly rooted, in the hearts of all the brethren. What is this truth, this towering height of religious truth? List, dear reader! I will tell you. It is this: **God is the Father of all men; all men are brothers.** By far the most, and especially the more prominent, lodges have their chaplains, rituals, or forms of worship, addresses, select readings from the Bible, prayers; all of which are calculated to bring home to the brethren the above-stated "truth." Thus while a lodge, such as we now have in mind, is by no means a church body, yet it most certainly is a religious body. For the lodge, as such, has a religion which, as we have said, in their opinion, towers above all the religions in the world. Just so a lodge member acknowledges, exercises, and practices **this** religion, the lodge cares not a whit what other religious party he may be personally associated with, what other religious tenets he may have and hold.

2. What objections has the orthodox Church to the lodge?

The orthodox Church, in keeping with the Word of God, repudiates everything which, in the manner we have just pointed out, distinguishes the lodge from other societies; especially and first of all does it repudiate, as a thing directly opposed to the Word of God, the religious standpoint of the lodge.

Of this religious standpoint of the lodge we shall speak first.

Is the statement true, according to God's Word, that God is the Father of all men and that all men are brothers? Is the statement true, according to God's Word, that this is the climax of religious truth, the truth that towers above all the religions of the world? No, this statement is **not** true. This statement—oh, it sounds very sweet and charming—but for this very reason this statement is a hellish lie and wipes out every vestige of religious truth and of Christianity. Is **this** a bold statement? Sit up and listen!

St. Paul, the Apostle, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, speaks of himself and of all true Christians and shows how they were before their conversion to faith in Jesus Christ. He says briefly: "We . . . were, by nature, the children of wrath, even as others." Eph. 2: 3. So then by nature, before conversion, we Christians were, and all other men are, **the children of wrath,** that is, the children of God's wrath. God's wrath was kindled against us, not only because of our actual trespasses and sins (v. 1), but because of our inborn wickedness as well. How, then, is God the Father of all men, as the lodges would make believe? Why, if that were true we would have no need of a Savior and Redeemer to bear the wrath of God for us and **make** us the children of God, and the entire Christian faith were nonsense. Thus the religion

of the lodge is a hellish lie, one that wipes out every trac
of Christian truth. And in the same chapter the Apostl
shows the Ephesians how they were before their conversio
and says: "Wherefore remember, that ye being in tim
past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcisio
by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh
made by hands; that at that time ye were without Chris
being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and stran
gers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, an
without God in the world; but now in Christ Jesus y
who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the bloo
of Christ." Eph. 2: 11-13. This applies not to the Ephe
sians only, but to all men. Before conversion, **all me
are aliens from the commonwealth of the true Church o
God, they are far off.** Only in Christ Jesus, by faith i
Him, are men made nigh, are they received into the hol
family and brotherhood of the children of God. How
then, are all men brothers, as the lodges would make u
believe? If this were true, we would have no need of
Savior and Redeemer to purchase us with His blood, tha
through faith in Him we might be in very truth childre
of God and thus brothers and sisters one of another i
time and eternity; and the entire Christian faith were non
sense. Thus the religion of the lodge is a hellish lie an
wipes out every vestige of Christian truth.

True, God earnestly **desires** to **become** the Father o
all men, God earnestly **desires** that all men become broth
ers one of another. But God desires to become the Fa
ther of all men, God desires that all men become brother
one of another, **in Jesus Christ,** in such fashion that a
men be Christ's by faith in Him. But that is not wha
the lodges mean. The lodges mean that all men ar
brothers, and that God is the Father of all men, **aside
from Christ and without Christ.** This, according to th
religion of the lodge, is the climax of religious truth, th
truth that towers above all the religions in the world an

is destined to unite and ennoble all adherents of religion. This doctrine the lodge proposes to reveal and to implant, and cause it to become firmly rooted, in the hearts of the brethren; to this doctrine the lodge aims to give a wide and ever wider circulation.

Do you see why the orthodox Church repudiates first and foremost as a thing squarely opposed to the Word of God and the Christian religion, the religious standpoint of the lodge?

But hold! Here is a snare. The lodge would catch us. It puts an evil construction upon our statement that not all men **are** brethren but that men **become** brethren through faith in Jesus Christ. What construction does the lodge put upon this statement? It says that we hold that believing Christians should love, and do good to, believing Christians only, but not to unbelievers. But God's Word and our faith teach us quite the contrary. The Word of God teaches us to "add to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness **charity.**" II Pet. 1: 7. What is charity? The following will show you. The Word of God teaches us: "Let us do good unto all men." Gal. 6: 10. Behold St. Paul risking his life a thousand times to save unbelievers! Behold a host of Christian missionaries going into far and, oftentimes, savage countries to save unbelievers! Behold true Christian people recompensing good for evil to unbelievers! Behold all these things and do not say that our faith teaches us to love, and do good to, believing Christians only and not to unbelievers. Notwithstanding, only believing Christians are brothers one of another.

Let us go a step further.

The lodge would uplift and advance in a material way—whom? Itself. Its benefits are mutual. If **the lodge's members** are laborers it seeks to aid them in finding good and profitable employment. If **they** are business men it patronizes them. If **they** seek political office it favors

them at the polls. If **they** get into trouble it seeks to help them out. If **they**, by their own fault, find themselves in embarrassment, it comes to their relief. Yes, the **lodge both** preaches and practices that of which it accuses us: love and benevolence confined to the brotherhood.

Benevolence, did I say? Surely the mutual aid the lodge renders in cases of sickness and death is not love and benevolence. It is business pure and simple, business based upon the principle: "I help him who helps me." This is the maxim of all mutual aid societies.

Besides all these things, the lodge is a secret, oath-bound brotherhood.

This is what the orthodox Church repudiates. This is **what she has against the lodge.**

This will be explained more fully in the next paragraph.

3. Why cannot an orthodox Christian be a lodge-member?

Because he cannot swear allegiance to another master, the bitter foe of his dear Lord Jesus Christ; because he cannot serve such master, nor follow his flag.

We know that the lodge, as such, is unchristian, nay, antichristian. Who, then, is the invisible head and ruler of the lodge? It is Satan. He it is who sets his trap for men in the lodge, offering them earthly advantages and promising them an exalted knowledge of the truth. He it is who, in the lodge, unites men into a brotherhood that shall keep his—Satan's—secrets, shall, in reality, swear **him** allegiance and serve him and follow his flag.

Can an orthodox Christian do such a thing, take part in such a thing? He most assuredly cannot.

Hence that Christian who knows what the lodge is and yet would belong to the lodge and further its ends and

aims, that Christian has fallen from the Christian faith and deliberately gone over to Satan's camp.

But cannot an orthodox Christian belong to a lodge if he repudiates the antichristian ends and aims of the lodge, adheres to the Christian faith, and merely avails himself of the earthly advantages that the lodge offers him?

No, under these circumstances he cannot by any means belong to the lodge.

You readily comprehend that, do you not?

That a false Christian, one whose religion has never differed from that of the lodge, who has always believed that God is the Father of all men and that all men are brothers and that all who live up to this view as best they can will be justified and saved—that such a person should unite with a lodge in order to enjoy the advantages which the lodge offers is not at all surprising. Such a person merely dons a different uniform of his old master's, whom, in fact, he has always adhered to; he continues to follow the flag of his old chief whom he has always served, to-wit: that of Satan. For this reason so many pastors and laymen of unorthodox sects and of Lutheran churches that have fallen away from the Lutheran faith, belong to lodges and cannot see why that should be wrong; on the contrary, they deem it a fine and praiseworthy thing. Do not marvel at this, dear reader; do not be offended at it. 'Tis most natural.

But an orthodox Christian, one who knows the grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ, who heartily denounces the antichristian ends and aims of the lodge, adheres to the Christian faith and is resolved to abide faithful to his Lord and Savior even unto death—how can he swear allegiance to the secret brotherhood of them who rally round the flag of Satan and who in the countless army of this general, called Gog and Magog (Rev. 20: 7-9), compass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city, the one holy Christian Church? Can he do that for

the sake of earthly advantages, such as the lodge holds forth?

Surely, it is easy to understand that an orthodox Christian cannot belong to a lodge. And we need not say another word on this score.

But here is the Word of God.

The Lord Jesus says: "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." Mark 8: 34-38. And St. Paul says by the Holy Spirit: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." II Cor. 6: 14-18. And: "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Eph. 5: 11. And again the Lord Jesus says: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other." Math. 6: 24. And Elijah the

Prophet says to Israel: "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him." I Kings 18: 21.

But if an orthodox Christian were not to attend the meetings of the lodge, were not to take any part in its religious ceremonies, if he were merely to pay his dues, could he not, under these circumstances, be a member and avail himself of the earthly advantages?

He could not.

Nor is this hard to understand.

Look the matter squarely in the face.

He that would belong to the lodge in this manner, wouldn't he still be guilty of swearing allegiance to it at the time of his initiation? Wouldn't he still figure as a lodge member, giving offense to the weaker brethren and tempting them to join? Wouldn't he still be halting on both sides, giving neither Christ nor Satan his whole-hearted support? Could he by word and deed reprove the unfruitful works of darkness which are carried on in the lodge? Could such conduct be called obedience to the words of the Lord: "Come out from among them and be ye separate"? Would not such a Christian still be striving to serve two masters: God and Mammon?

4. How should an orthodox Church deal with lodge members already within her fold and with such as desire to unite with her?

With lodge members already within her fold, an orthodox Church should deal according to Matth. 18: 15-20. Such (lodge members) as desire to unite with her she should first instruct in the Christian doctrine, and then, upon renouncing the lodge, they should be received into the Church.

It not frequently happens that the members of an orthodox Church are informed that one or another of

their brethren belongs to a lodge. In such a case it were utterly wrong and unchristianlike to say simply and curtly: You must either leave the lodge or get out of the Church; for our Synod and Church do not tolerate lodge members. That were legalism [1] pure and simple and quite contrary to the Gospel and Word and Spirit of Christ.

No. When it becomes known in an orthodox Church that one of the brethren belongs to a lodge such brother should be dealt with as our Lord Jesus Christ commands, Matth. 18: 15-20. He that has definite knowledge of the matter should go to his erring brother and should seek, with all love and humility, with patience and longsuffering, to convict him of his sin, and to turn him from the error of his way. If the brother lends a willing ear he has gained his brother. If his brother will not hear, if his efforts prove to be fruitless, let him take one or two more of the brethren with him, that in the mouths of two or three witnesses every word may be established. If the brother still refuses to hear, tell it to the Church and let the Church, as such, deal with the offending brother. If the Church's efforts likewise prove unavailing, the lodge member shall be regarded as a heathen man and a publican and be excommunicated. For in such case Christ's instructions have been carried out. All error is precluded. The matter is clear. A true Christian cannot have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness which are carried on in the lodge. He must rather reprove them. But the aforesaid lodge member is determined to abide in such fellowship, he is not willing to reprove said works of darkness in word and deed. He is not a Christian. For since the Church has conducted its proceedings with prayer and invocation of God, the Lord Jesus, who is present with the Church, will so govern the matter that the brother caught in the meshes of the lodge will, by

[1] Trying to do by the Law what only the Gospel can do.

such proceedings, either be led to repent and forsake the error of his way or will be made manifest as a heathen; such is His promise. And this holds good even though the lodge member persist in declaring: "I don't see why I can't belong to the lodge and still be a Christian."

In case a lodge member should apply for membership in an orthodox Church, desiring to partake of its blessings and privileges, it were utterly wrong and unchristianlike to say simply and curtly: You must either quit the lodge or keep out of the Church. For our Synod and Church do not receive lodge members. This, too, were legalism pure and simple and quite contrary to the Gospel and Word and Spirit of Christ.

It were equally wrong, however, to receive a lodge member into the Church and allow him to partake of the Sacraments and then later on deal with him according to the above-stated commandment of Christ. What? First absolve him from all sin and commune with him—because, perchance, he has declared that his mind is open—and then subject him to Church discipline and eventually excommunicate him? That were as much as to say: Maybe he is a Christian and maybe he is not; maybe he will be a Christian some day and maybe he will not. Meanwhile we will consider him a Christian and treat him as such.

No. If a lodge member seeks membership in an orthodox Church and desires to partake of its blessings and privileges, let the Church rejoice, give him a cordial welcome, and give him instruction and enlightenment from the Word of God. Let the Church make two things plain to him. Let it tell him plainly: 1, what the Christian faith and religion really is; 2, what the religion of the lodge really is. The result will be one of these two things: Either this lodge member will embrace and profess the Christian faith and leave the lodge—and then let him be received into the Church. Or he will choose to stay with the lodge. Then let him not be received into the Church.

But then the Church will have done what the Lord Jesus Christ wants the Church to do: she will have preached the Gospel unto him.

We know that we could say a great deal more, could reply to many objections that are frequently offered. But the sum and substance of what applies to the lodge and that which is decisive in every case has been said.

Woe unto the orthodox Church that does not take a determined stand against the lodge, but suffers this pest to flourish in the midst of her! Look at such churches—for there are such. What a sorry spectacle they are! And woe unto those pastors who from all sorts of considerations suffer this accursed thing to grow and get beyond control! The word of the Prophet applies to such pastors: "They are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark." Isa. 56: 10.

VII. Mutual Aid Societies.

1. What are mutual aid societies?

They are societies, which, under certain uniform conditions, pay to their members in cases of sickness and death a fixed and uniform sum of money in return for the payment by them of fixed and uniform dues.

This is purely a business transaction, quite similar to the transactions of any insurance company: in return for a stipulated amount paid in, the society, under certain conditions, pays out a stipulated sum of money. Only in the case of insurance companies the amount paid out is **proportionate** to the amount paid in, in accordance with the stipulations while in the case of mutual aid societies both the amount paid out and the amount paid in are in all cases uniform. To regard such transactions, as is frequently done, in the light of charity and benevolence is downright nonsense. For charity does good unto all without asking anything in return. And charity is governed in its well-doing by the actual need of its objects, not by the fulfillment of any previous stipulation.

The business carried on by the mutual aid societies is rather insecure. As the years roll by the number of beneficiaries naturally increases, and, in consequence, it frequently happens that such mutual aid societies go bankrupt, or, at least, are obliged to cut down their payments.

Certain so-called lodges are really nothing but mutual aid societies or insurance companies. But care must be taken in every case to ascertain whether the "lodge" in question be not a lodge in the proper, or stricter, sense of the word.

2. What do we mean by secular mutual aid societies?

We mean mutual aid societies in which **anybody** is entitled to membership, regardless of his connection, or non-connection, with any church.

Seeing such societies, as may be expected, often give balls and other entertainments in which worldliness is freely indulged in; seeing they also seek to replenish their treasuries with the proceeds of such entertainments: it ill-becomes a Christian to hold membership in such societies. True Christians should remember who and what they are by the grace of God: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." I Pet. 2: 9. Bearing this in mind, they will readily yield to the guidance of such utterances as these: "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Eph. 5: 11. And: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." Ps. 1: 1.

3. What are Lutheran Brethren's, or similarly named, Mutual Aid Societies?

They are societies in which only those are entitled to membership who adhere to the orthodox Church.

That such societies exist in the orthodox Church and that their number is steadily increasing is not a good showing for the spiritual standing of the orthodox Church. For the inspired Apostle says to the entire Church: "(Be ye) Distributing to the necessity of the saints." Rom. 12: 13. And of the mother of Christian churches, the Church at Jerusalem, so strong, so jubilant, in the faith, it

is written: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." "Neither was there any among them that lacked." Acts 4: 32, 34. Then there are dangers connected with such societies. Should a brother who is not a member of the society get into trouble the unfeeling remark is liable to be made: Why didn't he join our society? Were he a member of our society, he would now be receiving aid at regular intervals. Such societies, furthermore, are liable to encourage factional feeling in the congregation. Still Christians who are strong in the faith should beware of undue warmth in opposing these societies, but should give heed to that which is written (Rom. 15: 1): "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and no to please ourselves."

VIII. On Trades-Unions.

1. What are trades-unions?

Perceiving that in union there is strength, people following the same trade, or occupation, unite and form organized bodies, governed by constitutions and by-laws, for the purpose of securing adequate wages and proper treatment at the hands of their employers. These are called trades-unions.

The unions themselves designate such things as these as the ends that they pursue. We have not a word to say against these ends and aims. The unions also claim that they strive to improve the quality of labor. It were a blessing if they really did that.

2. What evils are met with in the unions?

Since the unions are composed, for the greater part, of unregenerate and worldly-minded people, it not infrequently happens that their demands respecting the hours of labor and the scale of wages are exorbitant; that they call strikes for the purpose of inflicting harm and causing distress; that they resort to violence in order to keep others from doing the labor that they themselves have refused; that they also strive in other ways to hinder non-union laborers from finding employment; that they seek to create and maintain a boycott against business not to their liking; that they usurp the rights properly belonging to their employers; that they seek to exact for unskilled and lazy workmen such wages as are earned by skilled and industrious laborers only: these and other evils are not infrequently met with in the trades-union.

3. What should be the attitude of the orthodox Church toward these unions?

The orthodox Church should exhort her Christians to have no fellowship with the works of darkness that may be done by the unions, but rather to reprove them. She should earnestly counsel her Christians, on account of the great dangers that threaten their souls in the unions, to keep out of the unions, if they possibly can. However, seeing a union is an institution relating to an honorable trade; seeing no union commands its members to perform the aforementioned works of darkness, in its constitution and by-laws; seeing a laboring man is not his employer's slave; finally, seeing it often is well-nigh impossible for a laboring man to find employment and make an honest living unless he belongs to a union—for these reasons the orthodox Church cannot forbid her members to belong to a union.

Let us consider this last sentence a moment. A union is an institution relating to an honorable trade. In a union people who follow the same trade are joined together with respect to the work of their calling, much the same as was done in by-gone days in the so-called guilds. A union is not an association of people whose banding together may be regarded as a purely arbitrary act, as in the case of a secular mutual aid society. Membership in a union may be likened to membership in a regiment of soldiers or its corps of officers, in the delegation of a political party, in a governmental body. Can the orthodox Church declare it unlawful and sinful for her members to belong to a regiment or its corps of officers, because these bodies have unorthodox chaplains and give balls and because the majority of the members are wicked and lead a wicked life? Can the orthodox Church de-

clare it unlawful and sinful for her members to belong to the delegation of a political party, or to the house of representatives, because the former may have a Roman cardinal, robed in purple, open its sessions with prayer, or because the latter has the same thing done by a blind Unitarian? Did Elisha the Prophet forbid his newly made convert, Naaman, to enter the house of the idol Rimmon in the company of his master when the latter went thither to worship and leaned upon Naaman's hand? No. Elisha said: "Go in peace." II Kings 5: 17-19. Naaman was doing the work of his calling, but he did not worship the idol. Thus a Christian soldier, officer, delegate, statesman, will take no part in the ungodly doings of his fellows, but he need not quit his regiment, corps, delegation, or political office on that account; because at the bottom of these institutions there is a calling which is necessary for the preservation of human society; although no one is absolutely obliged to belong to one of these institutions. And so it is with a trades-union. The orhtodox Church cannot declare it unlawful and sinful for her members to belong to a union, provided they do not take part in the sinful doings of their fellows. Such was also her attitude toward the guilds and corporations of by-gone days. If you join a society which is not founded upon an honorable calling, you are responsible for everything such society does, even though you personally take no part therein. But if you join a corporation founded upon an honorable calling you are not responsible for the evil things the corporation does, or tolerates, as long as you personally take no part in these doings.

We must use sober judgment in dealing with these things and not go beyond the proper bounds; else the Church of God will suffer harm. Let us stand firm where the Word of God calls a halt; but let us beware lest we call a halt where the Word of God does not.

IX. Encroachments of Capital.

1. How does capital frequently encroach upon labor?

By means of long working hours, short pay, and child labor.

Capital, when it employs labor, frequently enforces, when it can, unreasonably long working hours. We have known street car companies, for example, to divide the day into three shifts and to require their men to work two shifts per day in ever-changing order. Now, that is altogether too much. Such inhuman treatment cannot fail, on the long run, to undermine the health of employees and it puts a proper human existence, not to speak of a well-regulated home life, out of the question. And oh, how waiters and waitresses often have to slave in the restaurants of large cities!

And all too often these long working hours go hand in hand with all too short pay. Who has not heard of the so-called sweatshops? And is it not a matter of common knowledge that working girls who serve as clerks in large establishments can hardly make a living without sacrificing their honesty or their chastity?

And oh, what a crying shame that mere children, both boys and girls, are tied down to hard labor in the factories of the rich! To be sure, the parents of these poor unfortunates are not free from blame. Why do they put their children to such work? But that does not justify the employers. It is gratifying to note, however, that in this country laws have been passed abolishing child labor.

Is it any wonder, under such circumstances, that the laboring people seek to protect themselves against encroachments upon their rights by banding themselves together in unions?

2. How do capitalists enroach upon commerce and trade, yea, upon the general public?

By forming so-called trusts; that is, by merging a number of business corporations of the same kind into one gigantic combine under one management and thus rendering competition well-nigh impossible, they manage to crush the life out of the small business man and tradesman, and when they have practically succeeded in killing competition they enrich themselves by raising the prices of their goods and thus increasing the cost of living.

In such and similar ways they serve their belly and Mammon and sacrifice the welfare of their fellowmen to these miserable gods. Just see how extravagantly rich some people have grown and are still growing!

3. What should be the attitude of the orthodox Church toward such encroachments of capital?

The orthodox Church should not resort to violence to abolish these abuses, after the manner of worldly-minded people; she should rather suffer wrong. If her members can, as citizens, remedy the evils of capitalism in an orderly and lawful manner, they should do so. If among her own members there be found such as are clearly and manifestly covetous and guilty of the above-named encroachments, she must deal with them according to Matth. 18: 15-18.

The Word of God says: "This is thankworthy , if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully." I Pet. 2: 19. And the Word of God says: "Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace." Jer. 29: 7. And the Word of God says: "Woe unto him that build-

eth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work; that saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers." Jer. 22: 13-14. And: "I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be . . . covetous, or an idolater, . . . or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat." "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person." I Cor. 5: 11, 13.

X. Present-Day Socialism.

1. In our day Socialism has assumed the form of a political party. What does this party stand for?

Its final end and aim is to abolish the struggle for individual wealth and hence to abolish competition. This is to be superseded by co-operation and equal distribution of profits. For this reason the state is to own all the means of production, both land and capital. Private ownership is to be restricted to those things which perish with the using, such as houses, cattle, and the like. With a view to reaching this goal gradually, Socialism is seeking, for the present, to bring more and more means of production under control, and into possession, of the municipality or state.

The above statements show in a thoroughly unbiased manner and in general outlines how Socialism stands forth in our day as a political party. We pay no attention here to the erratic principles and wild dreams of individual persons, however prominent in Socialistic circles, neither do we take into account the hostility to God and Christ, which is so eminently conspicuous in the Socialistic camp, but is more or less prevalent in every political party and in fact everywhere in the world.

We wish to add that a clear-cut distinction should be made between Socialism and communism, which latter **ism** insists that **all** things be owned in common, and which has numerous tenets that are calculated to overthrow all the institutions of God.

2. What should be the attitude of the orthodox Church toward this Socialism?

The orthodox Church holds that owing to the selfishness of depraved human nature the Socialistic state will ever remain an empty dream. However, inasmuch as the Kingdom of God could exist in a Socialistic state, she dare not forbid her members to belong to the Socialist political party. However, she should solemnly warn them against the hostility to God and Christ with which Socialist speakers and writers well-nigh invariably leaven their politics.

They only deceive themselves who think that there will ever be a permanent Socialistic state, a state in which the struggle for wealth on the part of individuals, and hence all competition, will be abolished and will be superseded by co-operation and an equal distribution of profits. The all-conquering power of selfishness, the inborn selfishness of depraved human nature, itself unconquered and unconquerable in this world—and the state surely is of this world—will never permit of such a thing. And this selfishness will not diminish as the day of Judgment approaches; on the contrary, it will wax stronger and bolder.

Still, if good and loyal Christians are persuaded that they can help to right, or at least moderate, the social wrongs to which the encroachments of capital have given rise, by uniting politically with the Socialists and casting their ballot in favor of that party, the orthodox Church has no right to forbid them to do so. For even if the plans of Socialism, as outlined above, should really materialize, the Kingdom of God and Church of Jesus Christ could endure unmolested under the new order of things.

But now there is one thing which we must be very careful not to lose sight of. Present-day Socialism, which, as we have said, has assumed the form of a political party, officially declares that it has absolutely nothing to do with

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the religion of the individual man. And thus it should be. But the leaders of the Socialists, in their addresses and books and periodicals, persistently draw their hostility to God and Christ into their politics. What does that mean? They not only spare no pains to make known the hostility to God and Christ with which their hearts are filled—there are many other politicians that do that—but they try to persuade their hearers and readers that the ideals of Socialism cannot be fully realized until God and the Law of God, and Christ and the Word and faith of Christ, are utterly done away. And oh, how successful their efforts along these lines do prove among the masses! Against such things the orthodox Church must earnestly warn her members.

That Christian who insists upon belonging to the political party of the Socialists must make a clear-cut distinction between Socialism as pure politics and Socialism which supports its politics with hostility to God and Christ. And with the latter he must have no fellowship.

Considering all in all, a Christian will do best to keep away from the Socialists, lest he endanger his own soul and lest, by his example, he mislead others into endangering theirs.

XI. On Insurance.

1. What do we mean by insurance?

We mean that form of business which is carried on by certain companies, called insurance companies, who, in consideration of certain payments and under certain conditions, previously agreed to, do obligate themselves to repair, in a measure determined beforehand, certain losses arising from misfortunes met with by those insured.

2. What manner of loss do these companies insure against?

Some insure, in proportion to the payments, against damage to one's property through accident. Others insure, in proportion to the payments, against injury to one's person through accident (accident insurance). Still others pay to the heirs of the insured, in event of the latter's death, an amount of money proportionate to their payments. This is so-called life insurance.

We shall consider these various kinds of insurance in the order indicated and see in what light an orthodox Christian should view them.

Of the variously organized insurance companies we shall speak, and pass judgment upon them, at the end of this chapter.

A. Insurance against Damage to Property.

One may insure against damage by fire, shipwreck, hailstorms, explosions, breakage, and so on without end.

On making certain payments or agreeing to make them, one receives a copy of the legal written contract, com-

monly called a policy, and in event of loss such as the policy specifies one receives a compensation from the insurance company.

May an orthodox Christian do that?

In the Bible, the rule or norm of Christian faith and living, we **fail** to see two things. In the first place, we fail to see that such insurance of one's property is recommended, or even mentioned. In the second place, we fail to see that such insurance is forbidden. Such insurance, therefore, is one of those matters of indifference, which God has neither commanded nor forbidden, and in which a Christian may use his own discretion.

To this the rejoinder has been made that a Christian should gladly and willingly bear each and every cross that the loving hand of his heavenly Father lays upon him, and that he should make no attempt to resist the hand of God. This is undoubtedly true. But, my Christian friend, when your house catches fire, don't you attempt to extinguish the flames and don't you call the fire department? Is that resisting the hand of God? It surely is not. Well, just so we fail to see how the insuring of your house or other property can be called resisting the hand of God. That unbelievers may abuse property insurance, and frequently do abuse it, in a spirit of wickedness and bold defiance of God, we by no means wish to deny. But the abuse of a thing is not an argument against a proper use.

B. Accident Insurance.

Let us illustrate this matter by means of an example. Suppose you are about to take a lengthy trip by rail. You realize that a collision may occur, or that your train may "jump the track," or that in some other way you may meet with an accident costing your life or so injuring you that you may never, or at least may not for a long time, regain your former strength and be in a position to do your work as of old and support yourself and family. In

in the name of Jesus Christ you commend yourself into God's almighty hand. You set your house in order, you make your last will and testament. You know of the Accident Insurance. You contemplate taking out a policy for so and so much in order to offset in a measure the loss with which you and your family are threatened through your eventual inability to work.

May you, as a Christian, do such a thing?

We give the same answer here that we gave to the question concerning insurance against damage to one's property.

C. Life Insurance.

This is a much-debated question. Some would all but make it the sacred duty of every respectable person, and especially of every Christian, to have his life insured for the benefit of his survivors. Others condemn life insurance utterly. Still others handle the question in so complicated and long-winded a fashion that a plain, ordinary Christian is hardly able to get much light from their utterances.

We shall begin by mentioning a number of arguments that must **not** be used against life insurance.

All those Christians who—justly—have no scruples about having their personal property, or even their church property, insured against damage by fire—all those Christians must beware of urging that against life insurance which applies to the insurance of property as well, but which, in the latter case, they justly do not regard as a valid objection.

They must not urge, for example, that a Christian must gladly and willingly bear each and every cross that the loving hand of his heavenly Father lays upon him and that he should make no attempt to resist the hand of God. We replied to this argument when we spoke of insuring property. And if this principle should be held

to be a valid objection to life insurance, then parents would have no right to lay anything aside for their surviving children. Yet the Bible says that they should so provide for their children. II Cor. 12: 14.

Neither must they offer this objection to life insurance: Life Insurance is a game of chance, a lottery, a gamble on God's gift of life to man. Property is no less a gift of God than life. But—some here rejoin—all that he who has his property insured can hope for in case of accident is to have his actual loss replaced, while, by means of life insurance, the heirs of the insured are liable to receive a larger sum in return for a small investment—in case the policy holder dies soon; and that is a game of chance, that is a lottery, a gamble on God's gift of life to man. We reply: The legitimate use and purpose of life insurance is to secure for the survivors a compensation for the loss (by death) of their provider. And in this case, is not the ability to provide, which is lost to the survivors by the death of the provider, of greater value than the sum which the insurance company pays? Does what is said about lotteries and games of chance find application here?

Neither must this be offered as an argument against life insurance, that the beneficiaries in a given case are liable to look forward with longing to the death of the person insured or may even be tempted to slay him in order to get the insurance. For such things may occur in any case where the people expect an inheritance.

True, life insurance is very frequently put to a use that is unseemly and wrong, yes, it is often shamefully abused. "I have a life policy for $20,000," said an elderly gentleman not long ago, whom we chanced to meet in a hospital, where he was a patient. "Have you any children who will need this money in event of your death?" he was asked. "Oh, no," he replied, "I have not; but I consider this thing a profitable investment. This $20,000 is

a part of my legacy, and I can bequeth it to whomsoever I will." That is an unseemly use of life insurance. And when one person has the life of another insured, making himself the beneficiary, because he calculates thus: If he dies I am the winner—that person indeed is guilty of a shameful gamble on God's gift of life to the other person and of a gross abuse of life insurance. Some people even insure the lives of little children in order to profit by these children's death. Detestful! And many other instances might be mentioned showing how the institution of life insurance is put to an unseemly use, yea, is grossly abused. Candor also compels us to add that the institution of life insurance very readily suggests such unseemly use and gross abuse. And yet—the unseemly use, yes, and the gross abuse, of life insurance, or rather the fact that life insurance is frequently and readily used in an unseemly way and grossly abused, this fact is no argument against the legitimate and proper use. This world puts nearly everything to an unseemly use and abuse. Does it follow from this that a Christian may not use the things of this world in a way that is seemly and right? A case in point is the use of opium and brandy.

In the above we have indicated in a general way what kind of arguments must **not** be used against life insurance.

Now we wish to show what, to a Christian mind, is indeed objectionable in life insurance. But this can best be said under the next question.

3. What different kinds of insurance companies do we meet with?

First, such as make a business of insuring all sorts of people. Second, companies whose members insure one another. These are called mutual insurance companies.

In these latter companies the insurance is paid either

out of the general treasury or by assessment of the members.

We shall speak here of the life insurance companies only, because they claim our attention most. If anything that we say applies to other insurance companies as well, we trust you will not fail to see it and make the application.

A. Such life insurance companies as make it a business to insure all sorts of people.

How do these companies manage to pay a comparatively large amount of money at the death of their patrons in return for comparatively small premiums and payments by the latter?

It is no uncommon thing for smaller life insurance companies to become insolvent. We have seen more instances than one. Therefore we hold, aside from all other considerations, that he is a fool who has his life insured in such a company. True, the government is beginning to place the life insurance companies under laws and regulations calculated to protect the insured. It does the same thing with savings banks. But does this really afford protection in every case? Doleful experience says No.

For this reason we shall consider none but the large, well-established life insurance companies.

How do they manage to pay out a comparatively large amount of insurance at the death of their patrons in return for comparatively small premiums and payments by the latter? How do they manage to pay their presidents salaries that make the salary of the president of the United States look small by comparison? How did they manage to become such a tremendous power in the land in a financial way? How do they manage?

We cannot go into details. But to state the matter in a nutshell, they manage to do these things in this manner:

they are faithful and clever servants of Mammon, and they skillfully strive, according to the rules which this their god teaches them, to increase the capital they possess and the money which their patrons entrust to their care.

And thus we have said what we set out to say. We have said what makes life insurance with this kind of companies objectionable to Christians.

Does this apply as well to companies of this type that insure property? Also to accident insurance companies? Does it? Then let it apply.

We shall now return to life insurance companies of this type.

Hard and grinding were the methods which the god Mammon taught his servants, the life insurance companies. The poor laboring man who failed to make one of his regular payments (premiums) because for some reason he had no money, had simply lost all—the payments hitherto made and the insurance looked forward to. Tricks were resorted to by the companies to avoid paying the insurance. And who could win a lawsuit against such money barons? With the aid of their tremendous capital the life insurance companies wrought all manner of harm. The government intervened and passed laws in restraint of the aforementioned harsh and grinding measures, the aforementioned tricks, protecting the insured and curbing the mischief. And the life insurance companies now have regulations that conform to the law. But has that changed essentially the mammon-serving character of the insurance companies?

You now can have your life insured in such fashion as to have the insurance paid to your heirs at your death or as to receive it yourself after a certain stipulated number of years, in case you then are still living. In this manner of insurance the premiums, of course, are correspondingly high. This is considered a good investment in our day, where the average man does not know exactly what to do

with what money he may happen to have. Thus a man's life is insured for so and so much and in case he outlives his policy he himself receives the stated amount. But this amount is merely the sum total of his payments plus a small amount of interest.

But tell me, servant of Christ, are you willing to lend your money to these servants of Mammon and let them handle it for you that you or your heirs may profit by their dealings? Did God give your money to you for such a purpose?

Think this matter over in a Christian way. We have nothing more to say. And—we leave the matter to your conscience.

B. Mutual Life Insurance Companies.

By this we mean mutual insurance companies that really are what their name declares them to be. Those that are such conduct their business as follows: A number of persons form a society or company and agree that under certain specified conditions they will, at the death of any one of their members, pay to the heirs of the deceased a certain sum of money in return for certain specified payments. And this sum is either taken out of a general treasury, if such they have, or it is raised by assessments levied upon the members.

This is precisely the same principle that underlies the business transactions of so many mutual aid societies. And if membership in such a life insurance company does not make a person a partaker of other sins, the fact that a Christian has his life insured in such a company and in such way seeks to repair in a measure the loss which his survivors sustain through his, their provider's, death—this fact cannot be set down against them as a sin.

XII. On Marriage.

1. What is marriage?

Marriage was instituted by God. It is the union of one man and one woman unto one flesh. It is entered into by rightful bethrothal. It is a life-long union. It is a union of mutual fidelity and love. Its immediate purpose is the orderly propagation of the human race.

We shall consider these statements each under a separate heading.

A. Marriage was instituted by God.

When God created the animals He created male and female and He blessed them and said: "Be fruitful and multiply." But when God created man He not only created male and female and blessed them with fruitfulness, but He ordained that man and woman should come together in **marriage** and should be fruitful and multiply in **marriage.** For thus we read in the story of the creation as told in the Bible: "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. . . . And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." "And God blessed

them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it." Gen. 2: 18, 21-25; ch. 1: 28.

Marriage is a universal ordinance of the Divine Creator for all mankind. Wherever man and woman come together otherwise than in marriage they are guilty of a bestial perversion of this ordinance of the Divine Creator. On the other hand, wherever man and woman come together in keeping with this ordinance, theirs is a rightful divinely instituted marriage. They are wrong who teach that real marriage exists only among Christians and children of God and that all cohabitation (= living together) of man and woman amongst non-Christians, even when in keeping with this ordinance, is adultery.

B. Marriage is the union of one man and one woman unto one flesh.

Yes, marriage is the union of one man and one woman unto one flesh. Polygamy is against God's ordinance. God said in the beginning: "I will make him an help meet for him." And then: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Gen. 2: 18, 24. Who shall be one flesh. These two, this one man and this one woman. Is this **our** interpretation? No, it is Christ's interpretation. He says: "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and **they twain** shall be one flesh?" Mt. 19: 4-5. And it is the Holy Spirit's interpretation, who says: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they **two** shall be one flesh." Eph. 5: 31. And He says: "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." I Cor. 7: 2. And in saying: "They

shall be one flesh," God makes marriage so close and intimate a union of one man and one woman that everything above and beyond that number is excluded.

But, you ask, how comes it that in the Old Testament so many saints of God had more than one wife? All we can say in reply is: "From the beginning it was not so." Matth. 19: 8. And God "winked at" their error.

C. Marriage is entered into by rightful betrothal.

Most assuredly. **The solemnization of marriage with the Word of God and prayer** by a Christian pastor is a fine churchly custom and a praiseworthy usage and all Christians should hold it in high esteem. But it is not essential to marriage. We have seen that real marriage exists among non-Christians, where the Word of God and prayer and also Christian pastors are not in use. Neither has God commanded that marriage be so solemnized. Both the Old and the New Testaments would be searched in vain for such a commandment. The **entering of one's name upon the marriage records of the probate court**—does that constitute marriage? Such entering of one's name is merely compliance with a just ordinance of the government, whose business it is to know who of its subjects are man and wife. Yea, should the government even require its subjects to have their marriage solemnized by a civil magistrate, let Christian people submit to such ordinance and thereupon seek the blessings of the Church in their new and important relation. Or can it be that marriage is entered into by **sexual intercourse** and **cohabitation?** Impossible! For this is merely the exercise of a matrimonial right and this right one must have before one can exercise it.

No. By **rightful betrothal** ("engagement"), by the mutual agreement to become husband and wife, thereby, and thereby alone, is the state of marriage entered into. When a man and a woman who have the right to do so

make a mutual promise of marriage they thereby become man and wife. Then they may, whenever they choose, seek the blessing of the Church, have their names entered upon the marriage records of the court, and live together as man and wife.

That marriage is entered into by rightful betrothal is clearly taught by the Word of God. The Holy Spirit calls Joseph, who was only espoused, or engaged, to Mary, the latter's **husband.** Matth. 1: 19. The angel of the Lord calls Mary, who was only engaged to Joseph, the latter's **wife,** v. 20. Deut. 22: 23-24. A damsel, a **virgin** who is **betrothed** unto a husband, is called the latter's **wife,** and fornication committed with her by another man is commanded to be punished as **adultery.** Likewise, the Holy Spirit calls espoused virgins who commit fornications, **adulterers.** Hosea 4: 13.

However, a betrothal, to constitute marriage, must be a rightful betrothal. Following are the requirements of a rightful betrothal:

First: Both parties must be fit for, and entitled to, marriage. There are bodily infirmities which makes a person unfit for marriage. There are circumstances under which God prohibits marriage, for example, when the parties concerned are too closely related.

Second: The betrothal must be voluntary and free from compulsion.

Third: The betrothal must not be secured under false pretences.

Fourth: In case the parents are living, their consent must be obtained. This is required by the Fourth Commandment. However, parents must bear in mind that they have no right to tyrranize their chlidren and to refuse their consent merely to gratify their whims or personal preferences.

Where any one of these requirements is lacking no marriage has taken place; no, not though the wedding

ceremony has been duly performed and cohabitation has ensued.

D. Marriage is a life-long union.

We read that one day the Pharisees asked the Lord Jesus: "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" "And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female. And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Matth. 19: 3-6. We here learn from the mouth of Eternal Truth and from the Scriptures that marriage is a life-long union. But those Pharisees proceeded to ask the Lord Jesus: "Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?" v. 7. That was a great and mighty argument the Pharisees here produced against the Lord Jesus. They turned the Scriptures upon Him and upon the Scriptures He quoted. For it is written: "When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house." Deut. 24: 1.

What do you say to that, Christian reader? Is Moses, here, against Christ? and Scripture against Scripture? That would not only render doubtful the matter in hand, but it would completely undermine the foundation of our faith.

Hear we how the Lord Jesus answered this question: "He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so." v. 8.

What do we learn from these words?

This:

As a whole, the people of Israel had, from the very beginning, been a stiff-necked people, a people of intense hardness of heart. Especially with regard to marriage, the entire nation was given to heathenish views and steeped in ignorance. And for this very reason their hardness of heart was greater in this point than in any other. Had God resolved to compel Israel to keep their marriage as He had instituted it in the beginning, the people would have been consumed. And such was not His will. So He made an ordinance and published it by Moses, the first ruler of the Jewish nation, requiring every man who was resolved to put away his wife—which it was not right for him to—because he had found some uncleanness in her, to at least give his wife a regular bill of divorcement. (Deut. 24: 1-4.) God made this ordinance that it might, at least, serve as a curb to loathesome and wild disorder and licentiousness and might preserve some order. This law, then, was a **civil** law. And seeing it was a civil law, its purpose was not to show what was right and just in the sight of God, but merely to bridle, to stem the tide of injustice, lest, like an angry flood which none could dam, it flood the entire country. And this is a chief characteristic of civil and state laws to this day. It is not their purpose to teach us what is right in the sight of God, but in many respects their purpose merely is to hold in check what is wrong in the sight of God, lest it ruin the entire country. Thus to this day every state, in its civil laws, allows divorces, which are contrary to the Word of God, and merely specifies in what order they shall be carried into effect. You see, the state is not the Church of God. It has not Christians to deal with, but children of this world. Besides, what good would it do if the state were to say: You must not be divorced from your wife!? Like a raging torrent, the sin of adultery would burst every barrier

and flood the entire country. For this reason the state says thus: If you are determined to get a divorce from your wife, you must, at least, get in on such and such grounds and in such and such order. But that does not justify such divorces in the sight of God, by any means. And by no means dare a Christian do whatsoever the state allows. These civil laws are made merely because of the hardness of men's hearts.

This is what Jesus taught the Pharisees. And you now perceive, Christian reader, that Moses is by no means against Christ, neither Scripture against Scripture, as one who is uninformed might think on reading this passage.

Yes, indeed, marriage is a life-long union.

E. Marriage is a union of mutual fidelity and love.

Marriage, as instituted by God for man and woman, is furthermore a union of **mutual fidelity and love.**

Man and woman whom God brings together in wedlock, and that in a union so close that they are one flesh and are to abide together as long as they live, these shall also unite their hearts and affections. They shall not be associated merely like two partners in business, who hold together, indeed, because the interests of the one are bound up with those of the other—but in reality each is seeking his own good, not his partner's. Man and wife shall not be yoked together like two oxen, whose master has hitched them to the self-same wagon and which pull the wagon together—they can't help it, they have to! No. Man and wife should live their married life **in mutual fidelity and love.**

And as the union of man and wife in marriage is the closest and most inseparable of all unions on earth, so shall also their mutual fidelity and love be second to none.

So God wills, so God has ordained. For when He instituted marriage He said: "I will make him an help meet for him." Gen. 2: 18. And here God does not mean

a help such as an office boy is, but one that gives her heart and her hand to her husband. This may be seen from another utterance of God's which describes a virtuous woman in the following beautiful way: "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her . . . she will do him good and not evil all the days of her life." Prov. 31: 11-12.

But this fidelity and love shall be **mutual.** As the woman shall cleave to her husband in fidelity and love, so shall the man to his wife. So we read Gen. 2: 24: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife." A man's wife shall be to him the nearest and dearest person on earth, to her shall he cleave more closely and unfalteringly—in fidelity and love—than to his very father and mother or any person in the wide world.

F. The immediate purpose of marriage is the orderly propagation of the human race.

Both men and angels are God's creatures. But God's mode of creation is not the same in both cases. The angels He created all at one time; in the very beginning He created as many angels as He desired to call into being. Not so with man.

To cary out His purpose expressed in the words: "Let us make man," God first created Adam. Then God said: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore—says God for all time to come—shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

Thus God did and thus He ordained, and thus He instituted **marriage.** And then God blessed Adam and Eve and all married people and said: "Be fruitful and multiply." Thus in creating mankind God adheres to the following plan: Having, in the beginning, created male and female and having united these two in wedlock and having blessed them with faithfulness, He now wills that children be born of father and mother **in wedlock** until the number is reached which He has purposed to create. Through natural birth by man and wife, by father and mother, **in wedlock,** would God create mankind, would He propagate the human race. This is His ordinance, His will.

True, children are begotten and born outside the divine institution of wedlock. And such children, too, are of God's creation and of God's providence. But their parents did not adhere to the order which God has established for the propagation of the human race and which is—solely and exclusively!—marriage. God wills that the children of men shall have parents, who shall live together in wedlock, as He has instituted it. This is His ordinance and established order.

Keeping this in view, you will have to say that marriage is a sacred thing, sacred in every way, and we are right in speaking of **"holy wedlock."**

But—O Lord have mercy on us!—how thoroughly have marriage and the things pertaining to marriage been desecrated and defiled by sin! The desecration of marriage and of the acts belonging to marriage has become our second nature, as it were. Adam and Eve, prior to the fall, saw in marriage **naught** but what was holy, because **they** were holy. But as for us unholy sinners, we can hardly trust our senses when we read: "They were both naked, the man and his wife, and **were not ashamed.**" And yet that was just as it ought to be; yea, it could not —then—be otherwise. However, a mighty change came over Adam and Eve when they fell into sin and became

unholy. "The eyes of them both were opened, and **they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.**" Gen. 3: 7.) And from that time on the desecration of marriage waxed great on earth in the thoughts and words and deeds of men.

And this leads up to another and second purpose which marriage is now to serve. Of this purpose St. Paul writes by the Holy Spirit: "To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency." I Cor. 7: 2-5. All we need say, here, is that the "due benevolence" spoken of in this place is sexual intercourse.

A final purpose of marriage is that the children born of such union shall have parents who shall lovingly provide for them and bring them up. Oh, how long the children of men are helpless and dependent and in need of fostering care and guidance!

2. What sins war against the divine institution of marriage?

Fornication and all uncleanness, whether committed in or out of wedlock. Malicious desertion. Unwarranted separation or divorce. Non-support (of his family) on the part of the husband, neglect(of her family) on the part of the wife. Refusal of sexual intercourse. Prevention of pregnancy. Causing or procuring abortion. Conjugal discord.

Here, too, we shall consider each matter under a separate heading.

A. Fornication and all uncleanness, whether committed in or out of wedlock.

Sternly does God forbid the sin of fornication time and again in the Bible. The Apostle writes by the Holy Spirit: "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." I Cor. 6: 15-20.

God has ordained that man and woman shall become one flesh **in wedlock.** Whenever man and woman become one flesh outside of wedlock they commit the sin of fornication, a grievous sin, which wars against the ordinance of God.

This sin is committed when a man betrays a maiden and makes her subservient to his lust and she suffers herself to be so betrayed. And oh, what a world of suffering and misery and disgrace and further transgression has followed in the wake of this sin! Think this over, dear reader.

This sin is committed when a wanton widow, or a maiden that is already fallen betrays a young man and he suffers himself to be thus betrayed.

This sin is committed when an unmarried man or a youth patronizes public harlots. And severe punishment

well-nigh invariably follows in the wake of this sin. Public harlots are, almost without exception, afflicted with an exceedingly virulent venereal disease. He that sins with them is infected and carries the infection farther, possibly into wedlock itself, and causes unspeakable woe. And oh, how horribly prevalent this pestilence is! Far more prevalent than innocent hearts imagine. We could not count the instances that have come under our own observation. And this disease is hard to cure. In many cases it baffles the skill of physicians for a very long time. In many cases they never succeed in healing it. Oftentimes a person appears to be healed, when lo! years afterward the malady will reappear in some part of the body, not infrequently in the brain; in which case it often causes a species of insanity **(paresis)** and death.

When a married man or married woman commits the sin of fornication he or she thereby commits adultery. The marriage bond is thereby torn asunder and the marriage hitherto existing is annulled. The innocent party now has the right to separate from the guilty spouse and obtain a legal divorce. Matth. 5: 32; 19: 9. However, this need not be done. The innocent party may, if that seem perferable, forgive the guilty but penitent spouse upon the latter's promise to amend and may resume and continue the former relation.

The divine institution of marriage is warred against by all manner of sexual uncleanness.

Of sexual uncleanness you may read Rom. 1: 26-27. One of the most common forms this sin assumes, one that is shockingly prevalent among young people, is the practice of **masturbation or self-abuse,** a practice which, if persisted in, means certain ruin of both body and soul. Another species of sexual uncleanness is indulged in when a betrothed couple have sexual intercourse as man and wife prior to their wedding. It is true: betrothal constitutes matrimony. But it is universally understood that

prior to the wedding the matrimonial right shall not be exercised. Therefore if betrothed persons would live as married persons, let them have their marriage solemnized. Marriage is an open and honorable relation. Such secret doings bring dishonor upon the doers. A betrothed man should hold his fiancé too dear, and esteem her too highly, to bring such dishonor upon her and she should not suffer herself to be thus dishonored.

B. Malicious Desertion.

When a man deserts his wife, when he leaves her, forsakes her, separates from her, without having just cause for so doing, merely because he is no longer pleased with her, or because he is no longer willing to support her and the family, or because he is tired of bearing a certain matrimonial cross, such as sickness, whimsicalness, or some other weakness in his wife's body or character—that is malicious desertion. And when a woman for similar reasons deserts her husband, that is malicious desertion. Every time one spouse deserts the other for reasons which are not valid before God and His word, that spouse is guilty of malicious desertion, that spouse asserts his or her evil will against the good and holy will of God.

Malicious desertion is **adultery,** a dissolution of the marriage bond, the nuptial knot, which God has tied.

Malicious desertion of him or her to whom one is betrothed is adultery.

But not all is malicious desertion that appears to be such and apparently starts out as such. Joseph, who was espoused, or engaged, to Mary, was minded to put away his spouse privily. But he was not planning malicious desertion. He was planning to do what was right in the sight of God. For before they came together she was found to be with child. And he knew not that this was of the Holy Ghost. He could not but think that she had committed adultery. And he was a righteous man. He

would not have an adulteress for his wife, but neither would he make a public example of her, would not make her pay the legal penalty of her guilt. So he resolved to put her away privily, to forsake her secretly, and shoulder all the blame himself. Matth. 1: 18-19. Surely that was not malicious desertion that Joseph was planning, he thought he was doing altogether right. Thus at this day a mistaken idea may lead a person to forsake his spouse while fully and firmly convinced that he is doing right. God grant that in every such case the error may be cleared away, even as it was in Joseph's case.

Neither must this be set down for a clear case of malicious desertion if, in a sudden fit of anger, or if, in a moment of supreme despondency, due to a long-protracted season of cross bearing, it so happens that one spouse "runs away" from the other. In such a case the deserted spouse ought to do everything to win the deserter back. And especially should that forsaken spouse which cannot but own itself blamable for the desertion, that spouse should, in deep repentance, make a sincere promise to mend its ways and should pray its spouse to return and the latter should do as requested.

Yea, even a clear case of malicious desertion should not straightway be regarded and treated as final. The forsaken spouse should employ every means that the Word of God supplies and should strive with utmost patience and love to win its erring partner back.

Thus it should be and thus it can be when both parties, man and wife, are Christians. The Word of God should be employed to heal the breach.

But what if the deserting party is an unbeliever? What can one accomplish with the Word of God in such a case? The unbeliever has nothing but contempt for the Word of God. He has contempt for God's Word as a whole, and for that portion of it in particular which teaches the sanctity and indissolubility of marriage. And in many

cases it is the very Christianity of his or her spouse that furnishes the unbeliever with grounds for desertion. What shall be done in such case? In such case the believing party shall endeavor by love and kindness to induce the erring spouse to return, and if the believing party has committed any wrong it surely shall confess its wrong and promise to mend its way. But above and beyond that, the Word of the Apostle applies in such a case: "If the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace." I Cor. 7: 15. The believing party is no longer bound to the unbelieving party in such a case and may have perfect peace of heart and mind, that peace unto which we Christians have been called of God.

Now, in every case in which malicious desertion has been clearly established that party which has so deserted its spouse, has separated from the latter in a manner that is wrong and sinful and has committed adultery.

In such case the other party, which has suffered such adulterous separation, may be **legally** separated or divorced. But this must not be so understood as if **this** party were separating from, or were being divorced from, its spouse. For the separation has already been effected by the deserting party, by its act of malicious desertion. But the intent of the legal separation or divorce is merely this, that the courts acknowledge the separation effected by the malicious desertion—that the courts, acknowledge this separation as such and will not restrain the deserted spouse from entering into another marriage. Let this be correctly understood.

C. Unwarranted Separation and Divorce.

When the Bible speaks of separation, of the act of separating from one's spouse, what does it mean? Does it mean legal separation, or divorce? Well, it means that, too. By rights, however, and first of all, it means the

aforesaid act of separating and departing from one's spouse, whether legally or otherwise. In Israel, according to the civil law that Moses gave, that man who would separate from his wife was required, as we have seen, to hand his wife a bill of divorcement. Thereupon such separation was acknowledged by the courts. And at this day he who would have his separation from his spouse acknowledged by the courts, must be legally divorced, as we have also seen. This acknowledgment, by the courts, of one's spearation is all that the Jewish bill of divorcement amounted to. Nor does a legal divorce amount to any more at the present time. Therefore we repeat: When the Bible speaks of separation, of the act of separating from one's spouse, it means by rights and first of all the aforesaid act of separating and departing from one's spouse, whether legally or otherwise.

Now, on what grounds may such separation from one's spouse take place according to the Word of God?

The only ground for such separation, according to the Word of God, is fornication, or adultery.

Only he or she whose spouse has committed fornication and is thus guilty of adultery, may separate and depart from such spouse and have such separation acknowledged by the courts.

Matth. 19 the Lord Jesus dwells upon this particular point and He says: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, **except it be for fornication,** and shall marry another, committeth adultery." (v. 9.) And in the Sermon on the Mount He says: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, **saving** (except) **for the cause of fornication,** causeth her to commit adultery." Matth. 5: 32. And to His disciples He said privately: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery." Mark 10: 11-12.

So there can be no misunderstanding and no doubt

about the matter. According to the Word and will of God there is but one reason for which you, husband, may put away your wife, and that is fornication, adultery on her part. And there is but one reason for which you, wife, may put away your husband, and that is fornication on his part. If you, husband, or you, wife, separate from, depart from, put away your spouse for any other reason, you are thereby guilty, according to the Word of God, of an unjust, unwarranted separation and you commit adultery. Thus says He who is Eternal Truth and His Word must not be gainsaid.

But oh, the world is full of such unwarranted and therefore adulterous separations!

Here is a couple that is rightfully betrothed. Upon closer acquaintance George finds that Clara is not as attractive as he had imagined. He breaks off the engagement and separates from Clara. Perhaps both parties agree to have the engagement broken off. But that does not alter matters in the least. The separation is adultery.

Then, there is a married couple. The husband finds that his wife is "not congenial," he cannot "love" her, cannot get accustomed to her. Or the husband is high-handed and rude to his wife. Or the wife is hateful and determined to have her way. They quarrel. Or the husband spends his evenings away from home, and drinks. Or the wife is very fond of society and does not attend to her household duties as she should. Or one party falls sick and the other gets disgusted. In short, in the wedded life of man and wife something happens that is either due to the sins and the depravity of one party or of the other, or of both, or that God's hand has imposed, and that makes wedded life disagreeable and burdensome, makes it trying. And one party refuses to bear any longer such disagreeableness, such burden, such trial. This party separates from its spouse. It seeks a valid reason for a divorce. Such reason is soon found with the aid of a lawyer. This

is an unwarranted, adulterous separation, it is adultery. Neither does it matter if both parties agree upon a divorce. It is adultery nevertheless. If, for example the man proposes a divorce and the woman, with a heavy heart or with satisfaction, consents thereto—in that case both man and wife commit adultery; the man has led his wife to approve of the adulterous separation and to consider herself free to enter into another marriage. Then that has occurred of which Jesus says: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery." Matth. 5: 32.

And Jesus says: "And whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery." Matth. 5: 32b. Whosoever marries such woman, divorced, as she is, contrary to God and with her own consent, he takes her who—so God will have it—is still the wife of her rightful husband; he therefore takes part in the adultery and commits adultery himself.

To help you understand the matter fully and thoroughly and to guard you against a false impression, we shall add the following:

Let us assume this case:

A man departs and separates from his wife for a reason that is null and void in the sight of God, not for the cause of fornication committed by the woman, and refuses utterly to live with her any longer as her husband. The woman does everything she possibly can to win him back. In vain. The man declares and insists upon it: I will not have you any longer for my wife. Human pleading, suasion, etc., is of no avail and the Word of God is appealed to all in vain. The man abides by his decision.

What shall we say in such a case?

This:

That man, the man only, has committed adultery, has torn the marriage asunder. The woman is free from him, as free as if he were dead. She can, if she choose, and

if the man has not done so, get a divorce and marry another. She does **not** commit adultery by so doing; for her former husband has torn the marriage asunder that united him with her and has done so against her will, and she has suffered this adulterous separation against her will. The man that now marries her does **not** commit adultery; for she is no longer the wife of her former husband, because he, you remember, has torn the marriage bond that united him and her asunder. He, her former husband, is and remains an adulterer. But as for her, she has not committed adultery and does not commit adultery, though she be married to another man; neither does the man that marries her commit adultery.

Just so it is when a woman, for reasons that are null and void before God, departs and separates from her husband and her husband cannot prevail upon her to return. In that case the man is free.

In such cases the separating spouse stubbornly and wickedly places himself, or herself, in opposition to God's Word and is therefore unbelieving. And the Word applies which we quoted when speaking of malicious desertion: "If the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases; but God hath called us to peace." I Cor. 7: 15.

There is a separation of man and wife which, in the language of the Church, is called: **"Separation from bed and board."**

What is meant by that?

A **temporary** separation of man and wife, based on their mutual consent to live apart for a season.

Such separations are resorted to when married couples, though the fault of one party, or of both, simply cannot live together in peace. In such cases there is sometimes a hope that temporary separation will lead to calm reflection and to a reconciliation and reunion of the parties concerned. Following is an instance taken from life: A

man had not been living in real peace with his wife for some time. He was unreasonable and quick-tempered. The woman added fuel to the flames by making loud retorts at first and then by scornful sullenness. Finally things came to such a pass that he accused her of having committed adultery on a certain definite occasion and flung this accusation at her at every turn. Both he and she were members of a Christian Church, and the matter was investigated and dealt with in a most thorough-going manner. It was ascertained clearly and beyond the shadow of a doubt that the accusation was unfounded. Every effort was made to convince the man that he was wrong. To no purpose. He persisted in his accusations. Life came to be a hell in that house. Then the woman proposed a "separation from bed and board," a temporary separation. The man consented. The congregation did not oppose the plan. But it did earnestly enjoin upon both parties that they effect a reconciliation and reunion as speedily as possible. How the matter turned out does not concern us here.

Is a "separation from bed and board" pleasing to the Lord? No. How can it be, seeing it is a result of sin?

Did the Church do the right thing in the case just mentioned, in not opposing such separation? It did, indeed; for it had hopes that separation would lead to calm reflection, to a better understanding, yea, to a reconciliation and reunion.

Is there a Word of the Lord that permits such a separation from bed and board? Yes. Here it is: "Unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife." I Cor. 7: 10-11. This is clearly a reply that the Apostle gave to a question put to him by the Corinthian Church with reference to a case similar to the one related above. And

what does the Apostle here say? First and last he says that the Lord commands: "Let not the wife depart from her husband," and: "Let not the husband put away his wife." That is law. God has made marriage a lifelong union. Then the Apostle inserts that if the wife depart from her husband nevertheless she must not make this a downright and final separation, she must remain unmarried. Such a woman must know unwaveringly that, though she has departed from her husband for a certain reason, she is still his wife none the less. She must be willing to be reconciled to her husband at any time, must long for such reconciliation continually. This the Apostle says with the words—indicating what is always best: "or be reconciled to her husband." And the husband, too, must be willing to be reconciled. For it is the Lord's will that the husband put not away his wife.

Can a spouse that has committed adultery, either by fornication or by an unwarranted separation, remarry without violating a Christian principle and incurring God's displeasure?

To this question, which is frequently asked, we find no answer in the Bible.

But for this very reason we cannot answer No.

Let us divide the question thus:

First: Can a spouse that has committed adultery by **fornication** remarry without violating a Christian principle and incurring God's displeasure?

Two requirements must doubtless be fulfilled. The first is that this adulterous spouse have sincerely repented of his, or her, sin. In that case the sin is fully forgiven of God. In that case let men also fully forgive and especially the spouse that has been wronged. The second requirement is that the spouse which has been wronged by such fornication have declared that it considers its union with the guilty spouse dissolved by reason of such fornication. If these two requirements be fulfilled, we

fail to see why a spouse that has committed adultery by fornication cannot remarry and be a Christian and enjoy God's favor in such marriage.

Yes, if these requirements be fulfilled, we fail to see why the spouse which has committed adultery by fornication could not marry that very person with whom it has committed fornication, and be a Christian and enjoy God's favor in such marriage—provided said person is single. Let us assume, for example, that a married man has betrayed a maiden. His wife has declared her union with him terminated and has secured a divorce, which she had a perfect right to do. He has sincerely repented. His sin is forgiven. Could not he, yea, should not he, now marry that very maiden whom he had betrayed and maybe made pregnant? This is indeed a very specific example. And it must be borne well in mind that when an adulterer or an adulteress marries that person with whom he or she has committed fornication the matter easily causes great offense. The parties in question would therefore do well to leave the country and lead their married life in some distant clime.

Second: Can a spouse that has committed adultery by securing an **unwarranted divorce** remarry and be a Christian and enjoy God's favor in such marriage?

Here also two requirements must doubtless be fulfilled. The first is that the adulterous spouse have sincely repented. The second is that it be downright impossible for said spouse to win back the spouse from whom it was unjustly separated and, perhaps divorced.

D. Non-Support on the Part of the Husband; Neglect on the Part of the Wife.

The Holy Spirit says: "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." I Tim. 5: 8.

It is the sacred duty of a married man to provide for his own, especially for them of his own house, for his wife and children. That is his calling whereunto God has called him. Whosoever does not do that, although he is able to do it; who prefers to be a lazy loafer or an idle lounger; or who works, indeed, but spends his money for drinks, or gambles, or spends all his earnings on himself, or keeps them for his private use; who lets his wife, and perhaps his very children, support him; in short, who would have his wife share her bed and board with him, but is unwilling to support her and the children, and meanwhile calls himself a Christian and belongs to a Christian Church—: let that person read what the Holy Spirit says about him in the above text. That person has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel. That person, if he refuses to mend his ways, should be put out of the Church. The civil magistrates should put him into the workhouse and make him work. Such a person continually commits adultery. He belongs in the same class with him that maliciously deserts his wife. The wife of such a person is perfectly justified in refusing—after duly admonishing him—to let him share her bed and board with her. She is justified in separating and departing from him, yea, in being divorced from him in due time. And if she does this, it is not she that has separated and departed from him, it is he that has separated and departed from her by refusing to support her. Shameful adulterers, and worse than infidels, are they who will not support them of their own house, their own wives and children.

The Holy Spirit says: "Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands." Prov. 14: 1.

It is the sacred duty of a married woman to care for her own, to attend faithfully to her household duties, to build her house. That is her calling whereunto God has called her. Would you read the Holy Spirit's own de-

scription of a "wise" woman, that is, of a woman who so builds her house, who so attends to her household duties, who so cares for her own, as God has made it her calling to do this thing? Then lay this book aside and take your Bible in hand and read Prov. 31: 10-31.

A woman who does not obey her calling with respect to her own, although she is able to do so; who is lazy and finds her household duties disgusting and burdensome; but who is wide awake and lively and in the best of spirits the moment some social affair or some form of amusement heaves into sight; who prims herself on such occasions, while leaving her house to the servants, or leaving it over to disorder and filth, and when her husband comes from work at the close of day he finds a home unworthy of the name; who seeks the pleasures of society while her husband and her children are left to entertain themselves as best they can; who squanders her husband's wages; in short, who is willing to share her husband's bed and board, but above and beyond that she is neither wife nor mother, save in name—: let such a woman likewise read what the Holy Spirit says about her in the words quoted above. Such a woman is a fool and plucks her house down with her hands. Ah me! what shall be done with such a pest? As a rule, her neglect of her own does not become so apparent as does a husband's non-support. If her husband is firm and strict with her, though loving and kind at the same time, in order to lead her into better paths, she will set up a howl or feign ill health or she will vilify him to the neighbors, and, to cap the climax of his woe, the poor man will be looked upon as a cruel tyrant and will be urged to be lenient with his wife. What shall we say? What counsel shall we give? Let her husband point out her duties and kindly urge her to do them. If she will not hear, she certainly is not a Christian. And if she choose to depart, let her depart. A brother is not under bondage in such a case. I Cor. 7: 15. Such a wom-

an is an adulteress, though not a harlot; even as the man who does not support his own is an adulterer.

E. Refusal of Sexual Intercourse.

Of man and wife God says: "They shall be one flesh." Gen. 2: 24. And the Apostle writes: "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency." I Cor. 7: 3-5. And it is written: "Rejoice with the wife of thy youth. . . . Let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love." Prov. 5: 18-19. And: "Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labor which thou takest under the sun." Eccles. 9: 9.

What do these texts tell us?

God has united man and wife in marriage that they may be one flesh through sexual cohabitation and intercourse. Therefore the husband shall render unto the wife due benevolence," the matrimonial duty of sexual intercourse, and likewise the wife unto the husband. The wife dare not think and say that her body belongs to her; no, her body belongs to her husband. And the husband dare not think and say that his body belongs to him; no, his body belongs to his wife. Thus one spouse shall not refuse the other the use of its body. Only with their mutual consent may they stay apart for a time, for example, in times of great affliction and sorrow, that they may draw nigh unto God undisturbed in prayer. But then

let them come together again; otherwise Satan might tempt them because they cannot contain themselves. And then, aside from this consideration, this is the portion which God has given his children in this poor miserable life that man and wife be ravished with one another's love. He that says the contrary is a fool, a self-made and counterfeit saint.

Still it happens, and that oftener than one would think, it happens in Christian Churches, that one spouse refuses to have intercourse with the other, wilfully, wantonly, maliciously refuses. And that not only now and then—one could put up with that—not merely for a considerable and indefinite length of time, which is downright wrong, but for good; the refusal is permanent. This is done for various reasons, which we cannot here discuss, but each and every one of which is null and void.

How must we look upon such conduct?

We must hold that a spouse which so refuses to have sexual intercourse with its mate and which will not be reasoned with and will not bow to the words of God quoted above that such a spouse is every whit as guilty of adultery and of separating from its spouse as is one that has maliciously deserted the same. And we must hold that the other spouse has a perfect right to put away this adulterous spouse or depart from it, yea, to be divorced from it. And here again it is to be noted that in this event the separating spouse is the one that refused intercourse. This spouse, this spouse alone, must be held responsible for the whole thing.

F. Prevention of Pregnancy.

The Lord God blessed the first married couple and said to them: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." Gen. 1: 28. This blessing and word of God extends over all married people down to the very end of time. The prime purpose of marriage is the orderly prop-

agation of the human race. And the Holy Spirit makes the Psalmist to sing: "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man, so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them." Ps. 127: 3-5a. And to them that fear the Lord, the Holy Spirit has caused this song to be sung:

"Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord:
That walketh in his ways.
For thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands:
Happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.
Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house:
Thy children like olive plants round about thy table.
Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed
That feareth the Lord.
The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion:
And thou shall see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.
Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children,
And peace upon Israel." Ps. 128.

And among God's chosen people, Israel, married people were very sad who were not blessed with children, and a barren woman would weep and pray for children. Such a woman had reproach to bear among men, and the finger of scorn was pointed at her. But those women were esteemed and praised as being highly favored who were mothers of many children.

How do matters stand nowadays in this world and, to a great extent, oh, to such a great extent, in Christian Churches?

Nowadays people pity and feel sorry for a woman who is the mother of many children. They regard her as one that is highly afflicted. Yea, they sneer, and point the finger of scorn at such a woman; she has reproach to bear. And a fruitful woman nowadays will weep and lament at

seeing child follow child in rapid succession. Married people nowadays rejoice when they find themselves blessed with few children or with none at all. A large family is not looked upon as a blessing, but rather as—as what? As a curse? People do not make the words of God their thoughts, the psalms of God find no echo in their hearts; they make the speech of wordly people their thoughts, and their hearts echo the vile utterances of certain contemptible preachers who by word and pen declare: You cannot blame parents for trying to keep from having many children; such conduct is right and proper; he that has but one or two children can bring them up better than he that has a dozen; the average man hasn't money enough to properly support and educate a lot of children; and why should a woman be tortured with the bearing and nourishing of a lot of children and with all the work that falls to the lot of such a manifold mother? Thus people are willing to marry, but the prime purpose of marriage they are not willing to achieve. Married women, yea, such as are only engaged, aye, even girls in their teens, lend their ears to "wise" women who teach them how to prevent pregnancy. And in their married life they put these teachings into practice. They will "not have" any children, or they will "have" one or two, just as they like, and just when they get ready. They prevent pregnancy if they like and whenever they like.

Now, we are not going to speak of the means that are employed to prevent pregnancy. No, indeed. But we shall say this: At a certain social gathering a lady said with a smile: "American mothers do not have many children." "No," was the reply, "but that remark uncovers a quagmire of abominable filth." Yes, indeed, such abominable doings made marriage far filthier than a pigsty.

And how can such hearts be graced with faith and fear of the Lord and with the mind of a child of God? How

can God's blessing rest upon such a home? We verily believe that God's wrath hovers there.

G. Causing or Procuring Abortion.

In our Catechism we confess: "I believe that God has made me." This confession agrees with the Scripture which says: "Hath not one God created us?" Mal. 2: 10. And: "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me." Ps. 119: 73.

How has God created us? How have His hands made us and fashioned us? In such fashion that we were begotten of our fathers and were conceived and formed in our mother's wombs. Of this thing Job speaks thus: "Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about. . . . Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay. . . . Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese? Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews." Job 10: 8-11. And the Holy Spirit makes the Psalmist to sing: "Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb." Ps. 139: 13. Thus a man is, from his very first beginnings in his mother's womb, a creature of God. And oh, what a wonderful creature of God he is! And God covers him as **His** man, whom He has created unto eternal life; and Christ covers him as His man, whom He has redeemed with His precious blood; and the Holy Spirit covers him as His man, whom He would make a new-born creature, created and born unto life eternal. This is most certainly true.

Against this blessed truth there sets itself a philosophy of vain deceit which says: As long as the child has not passed out of its mother's womb, as long as the child is not yet born, it is merely part and parcel of the mother, especially in the first months; and the mother can do with it whatever she chooses. This is a lie, a devilish lie, a lie hatched out by the "murderer from the beginning."

And this lie is uttered to cover up—if, indeed, the trouble be taken to cover it up—the sin committed by her who, perceiving that she is pregnant and not willing to be pregnant, drives off the fruit conceived within her womb.

This is **murder.** That is wilful destruction of human life. It is murder in the first degree, premeditated, wilful, and wanton murder. That is infanticide, murder of the murderer's own child.

What more shall we say? Such a mother is like the dog that devoured her own young.

And if the father, or any one else, consents to such act, or even assists in performing it, then he, too, is a murderer.

Circumstances? Can circumstances alter the matter? Suppose a maiden has been betrayed and now seeks to escape the shame attaching to her folly. Is she justified in committing abortion? Nay, O Christian! Nothing, nothing can justify such a murder!

Does a women commit adultery, tear the marriage bond asunder, who, against her husband's will, commits abortion, murders the fruit of her womb? Yes. For she destroys the prime purpose of marriage, the orderly propagation of the human race, even as does she who, against her husband's will, prevents pregnancy.

Suppose a woman is about to give birth to a child and things have come to such a pass that either the mother and the child both must die, or the mother can be saved if the doctors kill the child. Which of these two things should one choose in such a case? We hold that one should choose the latter. For thus one life, at least, will be saved. But it must **really be** such a case of either—or. Doctors often are willing and ready to kill the child without there being any such real and utmost need, merely to keep the woman out of **danger.**

H. Matrimonial Discord.

An occasional quarrel between man and wife we should not call matrimonial discord. An occasional quarrel is one of those things that are well-nigh inevitable, since man and wife, Christians and children of God though they be, still are sinners. Especially in the first year of married life, quarrels easily occur. For in that year two persons who are not yet accustomed to each other find themselves joined so closely together that they are one flesh and are jointly to lead but one life, as it were. Under such circumstances a slight collision here and there, a slight 'difference" and "exchange of words" is almost sure to take place. And in such case the woman, especially, should be skilled in the noble art of kindly, **kindly** yielding and holding her peace. And as for the man, he should bear in mind that it is his duty to be a gentleman first of all toward his wife. And both should have the unfailing habit of reading the Word of God together and uniting in prayer before retiring for the night. In this manner the gathering clouds will blow away. And blessed is the one that is first to extend the hand of reconciliation and to ask and offer a forgiving kiss.

For one thing we would not have you to be ignorant of, O Christian: Every quarrel between man and wife is a seed which, unless it be eradicated and destroyed, will spring up and bear the fruit of matrimonial discord. One quarrel will follow another, the hearts of husband and wife will be chilled, will be mutually estranged and embittered, and the result will be matrimonial discord.

What is matrimonial discord? It is this: The husband is against his wife, heart and hand and mouth, and the wife is heart, and hand, and mouth against her husband. This is matrimonial discord.

Matrimonial discord is a sin—you surely do not question that?—which is utterly at war with the divine ordinance of marriage. When God instituted marriage, He

said: "It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make an help meet for him." And He said: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife." What becomes of these sayings of God in a case of matrimonial discord? Man and wife that lead a life of matrimonial discord are like two wild beasts confined in a common cage.

How can matrimonial discord be healed? Solely by the Word of God. If the Word of God works true repentance and knowledge of sin, true faith, the faith of a poor and penitent sinner, in the dear Savior, Jesus Christ, and consequently a new heart and a new mind, why, then every ill will be healed, matrimonial discord not excepted. But care must be taken not to hamper the blessed work of the Word and Spirit of God by looking each upon the fault of the other. No, let each look upon his own fault and make no mention of the fault of the other. Thus not only will the matrimonial discord be healed, but a stout bond of love will be entwined about husband and wife. For the Holy Spirit not only tears down that which is evil; He, at the same time, builds up that which is good.

3. Whereby should a Christian be governed in choosing a spouse?

Not merely by love and attachment. Let men be guided by Prov. 31: 10-31, and women by Ps. 128.

We cannot expect people that are "in love"—we purposely choose this expression—to believe it, but true it is, nevertheless: Love, even fervent love, and attachment, even strongest attachment, unless they rest upon the proper foundation and are borne up and supported by it, are but a pleasant dream and, as a general thing, of very short duration. They are mere bubbles.

No, we cannot expect people that are in love to accept this statement as true in **their** case. And yet it is voiced

by a man who had nothing but human observation to guide him, by the poet Schiller, in his beautiful "Lay of the Bell." Schiller sings:

"See . . . if, forever united,
"The heart to the heart flows in one, love-delighted;
"Illusion is brief, but Repentance is long.
"Lovely, thither are they bringing
"With her virgin wreath the bride.
"To the love-feast clearly ringing,
"Tolls the church-bell far and wide.
"With that sweetest holyday
"Must the May of life depart;
"With the cestus loosed—away
"Flies Illusion from the heart!"

But Schiller continues:

"Yet love lingers lonely,
"When Passion is mute
"And the blossoms may only
"Give way to the fruit."[1]

Hereupon the poet, in lines that are both beautiful and true—as far as human truth and human beauty go—points out the conditions under which love will abide when passion takes its inevitable flight: he tells how the husband and father must labor and strive to provide for his family, how the housewife and mother must train her children and perform her household duties with untiring zeal and devotion. Yes, indeed, these things are indispensable where love is to abide when passion, or let us say, "being in love," takes its flight; and not only to abide but to grow stout and strong and ever stouter and ever stronger. But love must grow so stout and so strong that the words will apply to it which the Holy Spirit sings concerning the love of the heavenly Bridegroom and of the Church, his

[1]Translation by Lord Lytton.

bride, which love He likens to true conjugal love. The Spirit sings and says:

". . . Love is strong as death;
Jealousy is cruel as the grave:
The coals thereof are coals of fire which hath a most vehement flame.
Many waters cannot quench love,
Neither can the floods drown it." Sol.'s Song, 8: 6-7.

Now, to make love thus strong and stout, something more is required than labor on the part of the husband and father and the training of the children and untiring zeal and devotion to her household duties on the part of the housewife and mother. Genuine **fear of the Lord** is required on the part of both. For where there is genuine fear of the Lord, there is the Holy Spirit, the true and living God. And where the Holy Spirit is He twines the hearts about with a bond of Heaven-born love, of His own weaving. And this bond is stout and strong and cannot be torn asunder, and every effort to loosen it and tear it asunder will only result in making it stouter and stronger. And oftentimes the things that seek to loosen this bond and tear it asunder are powers which that love which is based upon more fidelity in the performance of duty, on the part of both husband and wife, cannot resist and overcome. But the bond which we just referred to is a bond that holds and one that binds the hearts of man and wife together in such fashion that in the fear of the Lord each spouse lives solely for the other even unto death.

For this reason we say: In choosing a spouse let a Christian be governed not merely by love and attachment. Let men be guided by Prov. 31: 10-31, and women by Ps. 128. Prov. 31: 10-31, gives an excellent description of a virtuous woman, while Ps. 128 describes a man who is signally blessed of the Lord. In both passages the fear of the Lord is mentioned as the all-controlling factor.

And both man and wife, when about to choose, or when about to decide to accept a spouse, should call upon God in the name of Jesus Christ and pray that He, the Author and Institutor of marriage, would help them, His children, to find a spouse after His heart.

Oh, what happy marriages there would be if this were done!

But oh, how carelessly people will enter the state matrimony, even in Christian Churches! And how many unhappy marriages there are in consequence!

Just a word on **mixed marriages.**

By mixed marriages we mean marriages in which one spouse is either an unbeliever or a member of an unorthodox church.

If we consider how intimate is the relation of married people to each other, if we bear in mind how they are to lead a joint life in every particular, how, above all, they ought to be of one mind with respect to the chief concerns of life—one must say that the contracting of a mixed marriage is a pretty sure sign of more or less indifference on the part of the orthodox spouse toward his or her most holy faith. And what will be the result? Either increased indifference or friction. If the marriage be blessed with children, in which faith shall they be brought up? In none at all? In the true faith? In the false one? Or the boys in the father's faith and the girls in the mother's? When sickness sets in and death draws nigh, shall the orthodox Christian see his spouse lie there and die with callous heart and void of comfort, or shall he see how some Roman Catholic priest gives him ungodly counsel and care, or how some sectarian preacher treats the poor soul with false comfort and goads it with merciless demands?

O my dear young Christian friends, in choosing a spouse have an eye to the faith, your own and your part-

ner's faith, and choose a spouse who is one with you in the real, true faith.

4. How are matrimonial crosses to be regarded?

Matrimonial crosses are those sufferings which married people as such are afflicted with. They should be borne with submission to God and with undiminished fidelity and love.

In married life a number of persons, husband, wife, and children, are closely bound together, yea, are utterly joined in one. Hence in married life, suffering and sorrow and grief are correspondingly multiplied. May not the father get sick, or the mother, or a darling child? May not one or the other meet with an accident? May not a child be born a cripple, or become a cripple? May not the father lose his employment and the family see "hard times"? May not—but who can recount all the afflictions that one is liable to meet with in married life, as they issue from the hand of God? From the hands of God, from the hands of the dear heavenly Father—these hands bless us by means of afflictions and will deliver us in due time.

But sometimes the matrimonial crosses are sin-made. Such is the case when the husband's Christianity grows luke-warm and he no longer loves to go to church and does things that are not right in the sight of God. Then the pious wife has a heavy cross to bear. Such is the case when the wife departs from the path of duty and of God and makes the home, the best thing that a man has, a sad and dreary place. Such is the case when a child goes wrong. Oh, how often this occurs! And what a source of anguish that is for pious parents! These and other sin-made crosses are infinitely harder to bear than those which issue direct from the hands of God.

Now, how about these things? How should matrimonial crosses be borne?

All matrimonial crosses should be borne with submission to God. O Christian, it is a source of delight to the Lord to behold man and wife, or to behold the man, or the wife, lying prostrate beneath the cross and praying and pleading thus: O Lord, I will bear the cross that Thou hast laid upon me. It is very hard, O Lord! But I know it will do me good! Give me Thy Holy Spirit's strength to bear my cross aright. But have compassion, merciful Father, Thou that puttest my tears into Thy bottle, have compassion on me, poor worm that I am, and remove the heavy burden from my weak shoulders. Do so, Lord, if Thou wilt, yea, and when Thou wilt, Thou my Ruler! I will not let Thee go until Thou hear my prayer, which I know Thou wilt do. Hear me, Lord. for Jesus' sake, who hath made me Thy child! Yes, this is a source of delight to the Lord, and bending low o'er the prostrate form of His pleading child, He says: "Fear Thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Isa. 41: 10. And He will bring it to pass, He will do all things well. Believe it, believe it firmly.

Where man and wife bear their matrimonial crosses in this fashion, in one mind, and that a pious mind, where one upholds and supports and strengthens and comforts the other in undiminished fidelity and love, yea, in fidelity and love that waxes the stronger, the sorer the affliction is, there the word is truly fulfilled: **"Geteiltes Leid ist halbes Leid,"** i. e., sorrow that is shared loses half its weight.

And oh, how soothing is such mutual fidelity and love! And the woman, the woman especially can accomplish great things in such cases and very often she does it. God bless such noble women! They are help-mates of their husbands, indeed.

But where a man or a woman has to bear the cross

alone, because the other spouse does not know how to bear crosses, or because the other spouse is the cause of the cross—in such cases the task is much harder, in such cases the task is very, very hard. God graciously grant that in such cases the suffering spouse do nevertheless bear his or her burden with undiminished fidelity and love for the other and with unwavering submission to God and seek not to shake it off and offend against God! In such case the lone cross-bearer will find God's strength and comfort to be in exact proportion to the size and weight of the cross to be borne. And:

". . . If thou never shrinkest,
And true dost still remain,
He'll come when least thou thinkest
And set thee free again,
Thee from the load deliver,
That burdeneth thy heart,
That thou hast carried never
For any evil part."

XIII. The Christian Parish School.

1. What is the Christian parish school?

The Christian parish school is the school established and maintained by the Christian church, or parish, in which (school) Christian teachers instruct the children daily in the Word of God and in the secular branches of learning.

2. For what reason do Christian churches have such separate schools, seeing the state has its public schools?

The public schools are irreligious. But now it is the duty and the desire of Christian parents to have their children taught, not in the secular branches merely, but, above all, in the Word of God.

It is both right and perfectly natural that the public schools of the state should be irreligious. The state dare not and cannot have anything to do with religion. Religion is solely the business of the Church. And if the state were minded to overstep its bounds and teach religion, what religion would that be? The parents of the children attending the public schools are, with respect to religion, a most incongruous mass: Christians, representing every shade of belief; Jews, heathen, and people without any religion. And the same is true of the teachers. Now, what sort of religion could it be that might be taught in the public schools? Nothing but a very shallow and, at bottom, heathenish code of morals. Hence it behooves all intelligent and right-minded citizens, and especially all orthodox Christians, not only to deem it

altogether right, but also to exercise the utmost vigilance and care, that no religion whatever be taught in the public schools.

As for Christian and orthodox parents, they know it to be their most sacred duty, and hence they have the sincere and earnest desire, to see to it that the children which God has entrusted to their care be instructed, not in the secular branches merely, but above all, and that as early as possible, in the Word of God, as it is taught in the Bible, which is able to save their souls and to make them blissful chlidren, and willing servants, of God both in this world and in the next. But how shall this be done? With very few exceptions, the parents have neither time nor ability to give them such instruction themselves, in the right and proper way. And how many are wealthy enough to keep private teachers for their children? For this reason Christian Churches have Christian schools for their children, in which not only the religious instruction, but the entire schooling, is committed to Christian teachers and is—a thing of the utmost importance!—imparted in a Christian spirit, in conformity with the Word of God.

3. Is not the Sunday school sufficient to achieve this purpose?

No. A Sunday school may do as a makeshift, but should never be looked upon as sufficient.

The Sunday school gives fifty-two lessons a year, the average duration of which is one hour. Do all the children, nay, **can** all the children, attend the Sunday school with its very limited number of lessons regularly? The Sunday school has a number, perhaps a larger number, of teachers. Are these well qualified to teach? The pastor teaches the Bible class. What benefit do the other children derive from him? The Sunday school cannot be any

more than a makeshift for places where more and better things cannot be had, such as missions and small preaching stations. But they who regard the Sunday school as sufficient and do not **want** anything more, anything better, they manifest a carnal mind. Alas! There is considerable evidence of such a mind in the orthodox Church in our day. One meets with a growing dislike for the Christian parish school in our day. One even hears it referred to in a spirit of mockery as an "idol."

4. What should be the serious concern of a Christtion congregation with respect to its parish school?

It should be the serious concern of a Christian congregation to have its school improve as much as possible, not only with regard to the religious instruction it affords, but also with regard to the instruction in the secular branches.

Yes, that is a congregation's bounden duty and a downright necessity.

The instruction given in the Word of God can never possess too high a degree of excellence. And it should always be given in an interesting, truly edifying manner. The Christian religion, which teaches how poor sinners are, by the grace of God, in Christ Jesus, made beloved children of God and led to salvation, this religion is not to be drilled, much less beaten, into the children. It must be taught in such a way that the children will look forward with joy to the lesson in religion. Basing upon the Bible history, which is essentially the history of Jesus Christ and teems with life, one must set forth the great doctrines of the Catechism, the doctrines of Sin and of Grace, the Law and the Gospel. The children must memorize, to be sure. But let the head and the heart be linked together. Let the teacher see to it that what is

learned "by heart" be also laid to heart. In every lesson let the teacher's heart and mind be full, earnestly and joyfully full, of his subject and so let him teach his pupils.

And if the congregation takes it upon itself to educate its children in the secular branches, it must see to it that they be **well** educated, so that the pupils of the parish school will not lag behind those of the public schools and thus be put to shame. Besides, after their Confirmation a considerable number of children are going to be sent to other and higher schools. This especially in the larger cities. And where two or more orthodox Churches are situated close together it might be advisable to join hands and establish a graded school with, say one teacher to every fifty children. Good results will be obtained in this way.

5. How should a Christian congregation deal with those of its members who will not send their children to the parish school?

Those who do not provide any religious instruction for their children, or who send them to an unorthodox church or Sunday school, should be disciplined. Those who send them to an orthodox Sunday school should be patiently plied with the Gospel until, with the help of God, the chill is taken off their hearts and they see the necessity of securing for their children a thorough religious training.

That pastor and congregation who calmly suffer their members to neglect the religious instruction of their children, sending them either nowhere or to an unorthodox Sunday school, that pastor and congregation who do not discipline such members are unmindful of their duty, they are not faithful. That pastor and congregation who proceed at once to discipline such of their members as send their children to an orthodox Sunday school but do not

send them to the parish school, try to accomplish with the Law what the Gospel alone can accomplish. In this case, where the children are getting the rudiments at least, of a Christian education, one cannot act upon the basis required in every case of Church discipline: "If thy brother shall trespass against thee." Mt. 18: 15. In such case one must seek to advance the lagging and strengthen the weak.

XIV. Concerning Confirmation.

What is Confirmation?

Confirmation is the process whereby, Christian children are, by means of Christian instruction, made firm in the faith, implanted in their hearts by Baptism, till finally, on making a public profession of their faith, they are, by a solemn act of the Church, pronounced qualified to receive holy Communion.

To confirm means to make firm. The word is used here to denote the act of making Christian children firm in the faith, implanted in their hearts in Baptism, by which they were then made beloved children of God and heirs of eternal life. Such confirming is done by means of instruction in the Word of God.

It is God's holy and inviolable will that His little children be thus confirmed. The Lord Jesus said to Peter and says to all that love Him: "Feed my lambs." John 21: 15. And the Apostle Paul writes to Timothy: "From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." II Tim. 3: 15. The Word of God is meant to be as sunshine and rain to the germ of faith, implanted in the hearts of children, causing it to grow and take root and bud and blossom and bear fruit.

Christian parents are to tell their little children about Jesus and to teach them to pray. As soon as the children are of school age they should receive regular and systematic instruction in the Christian doctrine. This done, they receive the so-called Instructions for Confirmation, given by the pastor.

We wish to say a few things about these Instructions for Confirmation.

In places where due order has been established, that is, where the Confirmation class attends a Christian school, pastor and teacher should work hand in hand in such manner that all the memorizing to be done for each Confirmation lesson will have been done before the lesson is given, this being a part of the **school** work. Thus the children will come to the pastor prepared and he will not have to waste any precious time hearing recitations, and the lessons will not be marred with chidings and threats of punishment. If, as not infrequently occurs, the Confirmation class includes a number of children that cannot be thus prepared by the teacher, or teachers, of the school, the pastor will do well to devote a little extra time to these children, say a quarter of an hour before each lesson, in which to hear them recite, and thus have them on an equal footing with the rest of the class when the lesson proper begins. In this way the pastor can expound the Christian doctrine to the children without let or hindrance, in heart to heart talks. He will also find time in this manner to go over the Bible history with the children, say in such fashion that each child shall in its turn read aloud a small portion of the sacred story, a thing the children are very fond of doing. Instruction imparted in this manner will be signally blessed.

Oh, a pastor should spare no pains, he should put forth his best efforts, he should put his heart, his whole heart, into this work of preparing for, and giving, these Confirmation lessons from which the children finally go forth to meet the dangers and pitfalls of a wicked world.

Words fail us to tell how nauseous, nay, how degrading, is a mere perfunctory, dry, harsh, dull way of instructing and preparing the children for Confirmation, one that merely manages to beat an outward knowledge of the Catechism into the child's head. Is the Christian religion to be reduced to the level of definitions and rules

of grammar? And even these should be taught with alacrity.

In cases where the pastor is not at the same time teacher of the parish school, we deem it proper that a Confirmation lesson be given every school day and that during, and instead of, the lesson in religion given in school. We deem it unwise to overfeed the children by sending them from the pastor's lesson in religion to the teacher's. 'Twould also tend to dull their appetites and make the children callous. Accordingly we also think that under the circumstances stated above the children should not attend instructions for Confirmation two years, bu only one. The course should embrace about one hundred lessons.

Undoubtedly the best way to teach the Catechism is to adhere as closely as possible to the text of the Small Catechism of Dr. Luther. The children are pretty sure apt to remember the teachings that are naturally and plainly derived from it. All else is soon forgotten.

Confirmation in the narrower sense, the public solemn rite that marks the close of the Confirmation course, is by no means a divine ordinance, it is merely a fine churchly custom. Hence they who ascribe to it a Sacramental significance and power are greatly in error.

That persons who have been baptized as adults and who have previously received a full course of instruction in the Christian doctrine and have confessed their faith at the time of their baptism, that such persons should thereupon be required to also undergo Confirmation, this we consider an abuse growing out of a false conception of Confirmation. The case is different, indeed, when only such instruction has been given, as was necessary to prepare the persons in question for baptism, and when these cannot, as yet, be admitted to Communion. In such case their instruction should be completed, whereupon they may be confirmed.

XV. On the Care of the Young People after their Confirmation.

1. Why do the young people, after their confirmation, stand in need of special care?

Because they are now removed from the steady influence of the Christian school and of the Confirmation course, and because they now go out into the world and enter upon that period of their lives in which the awakening lusts of the flesh make them most susceptible to the evil influence of the world.

2. What, particularly, should be the end and aim of such care?

That, having been confirmed, the young people be kept in the saving faith.

3. What is the only means a pastor has to attain this end and aim?

The Spirit-Word in public preaching and in private ministration.

In his public preaching, which is the principal means for the edifying of the Church, let the pastor avoid all superfluous and far-fetched thoughts and words and phrases. Let his sermons be simple and to the point; and let him speak plainly and tersely and with an air of freshness in all that he has to say. And all that he has to say is what is contained in his text. It is within the power of every pastor to preach thus, the man of inferior talents not excepted. And he that does preach thus will hold the attention of both old and young.

In his private ministrations, for example, in his talks with those who desire to go to Communion, let the pastor avoid all unctuousness and everything calculated to impress the people with his ministerial highness. The following sample will show what we mean. A pastor who had recently arrived met with a young man. "I listened to your sermon Sunday," the young man frankly said. The pastor rejoined: "And did you take to heart what I said in my sermon?" The young man bade the pastor adieu at the first opportunity. Do you perceive, dear reader, how void the pastor was of true tact? Where there is no special occasion for admonishing, let not the pastor admonish, but let him speak with his young people in a kind, cordial, natural, and easy manner—not, indeed, of temporal things only, but also, yea, chiefly, of spiritual things. But when it is necessary to admonish, let not the pastor beat about the bush, let him go straight to the point; and let him do it with earnestness tempered with kindness; and let him admonish with the Word of God. What this Spirit-Word, in public preaching and private ministrations, does not accomplish will never be accomplished.

4. What shall the parents do to keep their children that have been confirmed in the true and saving faith?

They shall never let a day pass by without holding a short family devotion (Word of God and prayer), they shall restrain all excesses and sins, shall pray for their children, and set them a good example.

It is certain that where such daily family devotions are held the Holy Spirit works mightily at the hearts of old and young alike. We do not recommend that in these family devotions the Bible be read from cover to cover, chapter to chapter. Do not marvel at this statement.

The Word of God deals with a great variety of subjects and does it in various ways. Some portions of it are better adapted for private reading. For the Old Testament a fairly complete Bible History could be used to good advantage, or a good book of devotion. Let the devotional exercises be brief.

If the children are guilty of excesses, if, for example, they run the streets at night and come in at a late hour, or if they do things that are manifestly sinful, let the parents restrain them, and that firmly and in earnest. This is their God-given duty. On the other hand, however, let the parents bear in mind that their children are children, let them not deny them innocent pleasures and never require of them, much less force upon them, the soberness of a riper age. Such rigor would only work mischief. The merriment of youth, if thus unduly restrained, would either develop into evil lust, seeking and finding its gratification in secret, or it would finally burst all barriers and become a raging sea.

By all means, let parents pray for their children! For what can **they** do, except the great Shepherd of the sheep do all?

And let them set their children a good example in all things. Good precepts coupled with bad examples are ruinous.

5. What can the churches do to lend a helping hand toward keeping their young people that are confirmed away from the temptations of the world?

They can establish young people's societies which shall furnish all manner of entertainment, and can help these societies to prosper.

One must look at these young poeple's societies and their entertainments in the proper light. They are not

in any wise a Means of Grace, a means of keeping the young people in the true and saving faith. God's word and Sacraments alone are the means for doing this. But one purpose they certainly may serve: they may serve to keep the young people away from the temptations of the world. Young people crave enjoyment. The world offers them no end of enjoyment; but we know what manner of enjoyment this is. The young people must be warned against such enjoyment; we must endeavor to keep them from it. Where, then, shall the young people find enjoyment? Let enjoyment be offered them in young people's societies, or let us say—we shall state the reason for so saying farther on—: in young people's gatherings.

Let the Church provide a suitable place for such gatherings. Let the Church equip the place with all sorts of things that furnish amusement, such as gymnastic apparatus, tables and all sorts of games to be played upon them, books, periodicals, etc. We have no objections to seeing a bowling alley there and a pool table and a platform, or stage, for dialogues, etc. Nor need a kitchen be lacking, that refreshments may be served.

Here let the young people come together for entertainment and pleasure. When? On certain evenings of the week. Or let the place be open every evening, and Sundays, also, for such as desire to go there, excepting, of course, the hours of public worship. Also let the doors close at a reasonable hour in the evening.

We are asked if the pastor ought to be present, at least at the principal and regular meetings, which all the young people attend, and ought to superintend them and open and close them with song and prayer. In our opinion this is neither appropriate nor necessary. Why should a social gathering of young people have the form of a divine service? Do other meetings of that kind have such a form? And superintend them in person? Such gatherings furnish less opportunity for excesses than smaller and

private ones do. And if ever anything unseemly should occur it will not be long in coming to the people's knowledge. The young people can safely be left to themselves in gatherings such as these.

But here is another question: May card playing be tolerated at these gatherings? Allow us to put a question in return: Is card playing indulged in in the homes of many Christian Church members? Indeed! Is it any wonder, then, that our young people like to play cards at their gatherings as well as dominoes and checkers and the like? That they must not play for money is out of the question, of course, be the game what it may. And as for card playing, it does not differ essentially from any other game. It cannot be denied, however, that card playing awakens more unpleasant memories of sore abuses than other games do. For this reason we must say it does not give us any pleasure to see our young people play cards. We do not believe, however, that it can be forbidden.

Another question: May mixed societies of young people, societies of young men and young ladies, be tolerated? Or, where there are separate societies of young men and of young ladies, may these separate societies sometimes meet in joint assembly? We answer both questions with an unqualified Yes. Do not Christian young men and Christian young ladies meet in other social gatherings? Then why should they not meet in such societies or gatherings as stated above? And if such meetings should lead to marriages later on, why—so much the better!

The young people sometimes take a notion to give a public entertainment, with music, declamations, dialogues, etc., and they love to invite the congregation and their friends on such occasions. We see no reason why they should not do these things. However, care must be exercised lest anything be said or done that tends to make a jest of the Word of God or that has undue reference to the Sixth Commandment, or that makes light of any sin.

The pastor's relations with the young people should be such that they will gladly submit the program to him for inspection. If he find anything unseemly in the program let him kindly call attention to it and have it stricken out. As for innocent jokes, he should let them pass. A collection may be taken up at such entertainments, if desired, but not for Church purposes.

If the pastor be in a position to do so, and they desire it of him, he may give an occasional lecture at these meetings of the young people, something entertaining and educational, or he may seek to enlist other speakers for such occasions. The magic lantern, or the mirrorscope, especially if the pictures be accompanied by explanatory remarks, will prove very serviceable. In fact, let the pastor be perfectly free to act at his discretion in the young people's society. If his make-up be such that the young people desire to hear him often, or even regularly, let him willingly respond and do all that he possibly can.

We have remarked that instead of young people's societies there may be young people's gatherings in the churches. What do we mean by this distinction? The following:

A Church may have an organized society of young people, which receives its members by vote and requires them to sign their names to the constitution. Under this arrangement the members are apt to take more active interest in their cause and willingly work for it; and this is a distinct advantage. But neither is such arrangement without its disadvantages. Experience shows that the young people of the Church do not all make up their minds to join the society. Those, then, who do not join derive no benefit from the thing and they seek their amusement elsewhere. In the society differences of opinion easily arise, cliques are formed, the zeal of many begins to wane, many withdraw their names and only a

small percentage of the young people of the Church do, in the end, derive any advantage from the institution.

What we mean by young people's gatherings is the following: The Church appoints a committee of fairly matured young people and empowers this committee to procure a place for the youth of the Church, also to furnish this place with all the necessaries and to take charge of things generally, provide for suitable entertainment and keep the ship in the proper channel. And every young man and every young lady of the Church has access to this place and to all that it contains. Individuals may group together and seek entertainment as they may choose; such as may have a wish as to what should be done may utter such wish, and the committee, by taking a vote, can easily ascertain the mind of the majority and carry out their wish, or have it carried out. The advantage of such arrangement is that the place and everything that is offered there is, at all times, accessible to all. It may be counted a disadvantage that the young people as a whole would, under such arrangement, have less authority in the management of affairs. However, with a wise committee things may work very well under such arrangement. And we, for our part, would give these young people's gatherings the preference, especially in larger Churches. Howbeit, we do not consider our opinion infallible.

The vital point is that decency and honor shall prevail. This being attained, let us not be too narrow, but let us grant to our young people every possible liberty within these bounds.

We might add that such young people's societies or young people's gatherings may also serve to keep the young people away from the young men's or young women's Christians associations. They that take membership in these associations are exposed to the influence of unionism of the very broadest and most contemptible

type. They are "educated" in spiritual matters by "educators" who are themselves ignorant of the truth, who are in reality deceivers, and they are in constant fellowship with such as are deceived.

XVI. Concerning Bazaars.

1. What do we mean when here we speak of bazaars?

By bazaars we mean public sales which are held by Christian Churches, or by societies within the Churches, and in which all sorts of articles are sold for the benefit of the Church.

2. On what condition may such bazaars be tolerated?

On condition that articles donated by generous Christians for such purpose be sold at proper prices.

3. But when are such bazaars displeasing to God?

When characterized by one, or all, of the following features: Solicitation of donations for the sale among unorthodox people or unbelievers; overcharging for articles offered for sale; prevailing on people to buy by all manner of means, some of which are unseemly; sale by raffle or other games of chance; the raising of money by various tricks and devices; clamor and turmoil of an auction sale.

When such and similar methods are employed to beguile both friend and foe into giving for the Church of God, that surely is an abomination in God's sight. Yet this very thing is done at the so-called fairs of the Roman Catholic Church and of the sects. Is there a disposition to follow this example in the orthodox Church? If so, John 2: 13-16 and Matth. 21: 12-13 should be read, where the Lord Jesus' wrath and judgment are recorded. The temple of God that now is is the Christian Church. And

what is done in the Church and for the Church is done in the temple of God. The assertion once made by a Baptist preacher in a conversation with the undersigned: "Money is round and it makes no difference how or whence it is made to roll, so long as it rolls into God's Kingdom"—this assertion is not true. God wills that His beloved Christians give willingly and gladly and straight from the heart and pocket whatever is needed for His Kingdom. Those are the sacrifices with which He is well pleased. Whatsoever lies above and beyond this, or rather lies beneath and falls short of this, He to whom all things belong would neither have nor bless. However, when Christian women make all sorts of useful things, or where Christian men donate all sorts of usables, and these things are sold in a decent way and the proceeds used for the benefit of the Church, that is a different thing and is not wrong.

XVII. Concerning the Theater.

How ought one to regard the theater?

In the theater the plays of dramatic writers are performed by living persons. The theater is given over almost entirely to the service of fleshly lusts.

The performance of plays by living persons is not wrong. Why should that be wrong?

However, both the writers and the performers, or actors, devote their art almost entirely to the service of fleshly lusts. Theater managers will not have it any other way. For the theater would not pay in any other way. The general public goes to the theater to gratify its fleshly lust.

True, in the more prominent theaters of large cities the justly celebrated pieces of great dramatists are occasionally played; also one can hear beautiful singing and exquisite music there. But even there such things are exceptional. If theater managers insisted on presenting such things always, they would soon go bankrupt. The public, which pays the bills, would not put up with such a thing; here and there it rises to such higher planes; as a general thing it calls for filth.

What is filth? The judgment of the masses is utterly depraved. The foulest filth is sometimes suppressed by the police.

But they that have the spirit of the children of God dwelling in them and are minded to strive against their indwelling evil lust and certainly are not minded to nourish and cherish such evil lust, to them let it be known that the ordinary theaters, no matter what names they may go by, do never offer the people anything but filth,

while the more prominent ones do the same as a rule; on rare occasions these offer something better, though even this, as a rule, is interlarded with filth. Let us strive to kindle and cultivate this spirit of the children of God in our Christian people and let us tell them what the theater is—they also see what it is by the pictures that are posted to advertise the plays—and the Christians will shun the theater. Can the tide be stemmed in any other way? We think not.

XVIII. On Dancing.

In what does the modern dance consist?

In this, that young men and young women embrace one another and move along to the strains of music; now gracefully gliding, now hopping and leaping. There is a great variety of these dances.

This form of dancing is very common in all European countries, with the exception of Turkey, also in every country that has a population originally coming from Europe. In other countries such close contact, in public places, between men and women who are not man and wife, is considered decidedly improper.

In earlier times this form of dancing was not so prevalent in European society, either. A different style of dancing was then in vogue: so-called contre-dances, which were executed in such fashion that men and women would now and then approach each other, in graceful and skillful motion, to a point where their fingertips would touch.

We do not wish to be misunderstood. Inchastity is, and always has been practised among all nations. But in public gatherings men and women were barred, and in countries having a non-European population are still barred, from associating together with that freedom which characterizes the modern dance.

How strange! In the so-called better classes of society a man dare not speak to a woman, much less dare he touch her, without being acquainted with her, or without having received a formal introduction to her. But let them have the slightest acquaintance, or let that introduction take place and any woman will, at a ball, let any

man embrace her, will return such embrace and will glide and whirl away with him. Such is the power of custom. Who originated that custom?

In two classes of society the women, when dancing, greatly expose their shoulders, arms, chests and backs, and at the present day the whole style of dress is such as to reveal the wearer's form. What two classes of society are these? The very highest class and then the very lowest, the class to which the public harlots belong. In the middle class the same style prevails, but not to such a disgusting degree.

This is the modern way of dancing.

Have we exaggerated matters in the least? We have merely told the plain, unvarnished truth.

2. How ought we to regard such dancing?

It excites and nourishes unclean lust; it wrecks a woman's natural modesty; it makes men forgetful of showing women the esteem that is their due; it should be shunned by the children of God.

He who claims that with him the modern dance does not excite and nourish unclean lust, he either is not a normal human being or he is a liar. This observation is founded on the very nature of things. We need not waste any words upon that score. We have quite often heard people confess the contrary. And quite often have we heard and read the statement that he and she are the best and most eagerly sought dancing partners who are most accomplished in exciting said unclean lust. And such is the case indeed.

What is a woman's shield and her sweetest charm? It is her natural, inborn modesty—inborn even in her sinful state—with its maiden blush, which does not forsake her even in a chaste marriage. Ah, he that seeks this modesty and this blush in a woman that frequents the

ballroom will seek it in vain; he may, indeed, find its counterfeit. The woman of the ballroom shines, indeed, but she shines like the fruit that is offered for sale, that has long since lost its bloom through contact with the vender's rag, and that has, since then, had the dust of the street wiped off it many times. Who would wish to clasp to his bosom in wedlock her who has rested on so many bosoms in the dance? Who would wish to whisper honeyed words of love into an ear that has bent lent to so many other words in the excitement of the dance?

We are speaking of the world and of its ways. Hence we wish to utter here a worldly sentiment. As gay and noisy, but not indecent, students attending German universities, we used to sing:

> Here's to the health of woman's love, hurrah!
> Who holds not woman's blush in high esteem,
> Neither does he regard freedom and friend.
> Free is the student!

Well, that young man to whom woman upon woman yields herself in the fashion stated above, that young man will soon lose faith in "woman blush" and will soon forget to show esteem to the woman that is really entitled to it. He will regard women as ready playthings. And how will wedded life be with such people on the long run?

Yes, indeed, the modern dance is a thing to be shunned by children of God. We know full well how sad is the state of affairs in the Christian churches with respect to this thing. However, as has been said with regard to the theater, the proper thing to do is to kindle and cultivate in our Christian people the spirit of the children of God and to tell them what the dance is. Then they will shun the dance. What more can we do?

XIX. Concerning Saloons.

1. What do we mean here by "saloons"?

We mean ordinary public bar-rooms.

2. How ought one to regard these places?

They are places which do not merely minister to the ordinate desire for a drink, but are conducive to intemperance and prodigality.

The occasional desire for a glass of wine, beer, and the like is not to be condemned. Neither is it to be condemned that there are places in which such desire is ministered to and in which such drinks are sold. But the saloons have no intention of merely ministering to this desire; neither, indeed, can they do so. They have no intention of doing so, because that would yield them too little profit. Neither can they do so. They cannot help been conducive to intemperance and prodigality. For how can the saloon-keeper, or bar-tender, know in every case who is intemperate and who is a prodigal? And when the patron's nose betrays his intemperance and his breath indicates that he has just had a drink, can one even then refuse to sell him a drink? And even when one knows that he spends more money for drink than is good for him and his family, is it proper to say in a public salesroom: You are a spendthrift, we won't sell you anything? Nor is this argument weakened by the fact that there are other lines of business that cannot help encouraging extravagance and prodigality. It is true there are such. But with him who spends too much for drink the extravagance is caused by intemperance.

The present writer once met with the following experience: The proprietor of what, by common consent, was probably the best and most respectable saloon in the city, who personally was a most honorable man and a regular attendant upon divine services, desired to unite with the writer's Church. The writer spoke with him along the lines indicated above. The man replied in such an able manner that the writer began to doubt whether he were not misjudging this particular case. So he decided to visit the man's place of business and try to arrive at a definite conviction. This proved an easy matter. On reaching the place, the writer straightway met with a man who formerly had been a judge and now was a notorious tippler and spendthrift. This man was taking his cocktail. On espying the writer, he saluted him with the well-known freedom and friendliness of a person under the influence of liquor. That was sufficient. All that now remained for the writer to do was to ask the bar-tender where he could find the proprietor. The latter soon gave up his saloon.

Can the keeping of a saloon be considered a "Christian trade or business," which one may pray God to bless and promote? And if not, can a Christian conscientiously be a saloon-keeper?

3. How shall an orthodox Church deal with those of its members that keep a saloon?

It shall deal with them precisely as bidden, Matth. 18: 15-18.

The fact must also be borne in mind that the offense and the temptation for other Church-members is infinitely greater in such a case than is the offense which is constantly given by saloon-keepers who are not of the Church.

The keeping of a tavern—in country towns—where farmers coming to market can unhitch and feed their horses and take a meal and a glass of beer or wine or the like may be inoffensive and a thing to be tolerated. But a sharp eye should be kept upon the business to make sure that it is being run in a straight and decent manner. Christ will not have His Church offended!

But when beer-brewers, who open up saloons by the dozen in the interest of their trade, are not molested by the Church, while the saloon-keepers are disciplined, as indeed they should be, what shall we say to that? What indeed?

XX. On Church Discipline.

1. What do we mean by "Church discipline"?

We mean the Christian discipline which should be exercised in Christian Churches or congregations upon sinning brethren with a view to preserving their souls unto eternal life.

2. In what manner shall such Church discipline be exercised?

In the manner which the Lord Jesus Christ has prescribed. Matth. 18: 15-18.

The spirit in which the Lord Jesus taught the practice of Church discipline was the spirit of unqualified, genuine Savior-compassion for the lost and for them who are in danger of being lost. He had just said: "The Son of Man is come to save that which was lost." (v. 11.) He had then spoken of the faithfulness with which He, the good Shepherd, seeks a lost sheep, and of His joy upon finding it. And He had said that even so it is not the will of our Father that any should be lost. (v. 11-14.) And it is in this spirit that we must exercise Church discipline according to Jesus' precept. If this spirit does not rule us, if we proceed to the exercise of Church discipline, say, in a harsh spirit of denunciation, we go at things in a way that is all wrong and are all wrong ourselves.

And now the Lord Jesus says: **"If thy brother shall trespass."**

This is the sole condition on which Church discipline shall be exercised.

A **trespass, a sin,** must needs have been committed by some Christian brother; a manifest sin against the plain

Word of God; a sin which, if persisted in, must prove disastrous to the brother's faith in the Savior Jesus Christ; a sin for which the brother has shown no repentance; by which he is, therefore, in danger of being lost. Only in such a case shall Church discipline be exercised.

Church discipline is not in order when a brother does a thing which human opinion, indeed, would declare a sin, but which the Word of God does not so declare. We might mention many examples to illustrate this point, but let the following suffice: A Church once undertook to discipline a highly respected Christian brother because the latter insisted upon being released from this Church in order to unite with one that was nearer to his home and could be reached more conveniently. The people thought that was a sin. But where is there a word of God that makes that a sin?

Neither is Church discipline in order when a Christian, in the heat of excitement, or from lack of foresight, says or does a thing that is, indeed, manifestly wrong, but which he himself immediately deplores. A pious old Christian gentleman was unaccustomed to liquor. One day it so happened that he, in a large gathering of his fellow Church-members, drank a couple of glasses of wine and it made him "jolly." His pastor, who was present, induced him to retire to an adjoining room, where he fell asleep. One of the Church members very indignantly demanded that the brother be disciplined. The pastor said something to the indignant one that cooled his ardor appreciably, while to the unfortunate elderly brother, who awoke in deepest sorrow, he spoke words of kindly comfort.

In no case, no matter what the sin that has been committed shall the sinner be disciplined if he is already penitent. For in such case the thing which Church discipline is intended to accomplish is accomplished already. If the sin has become known the congregation shall be

informed of the sinner's repentance, in order that the offence that has been given may be done away. But this does not come under the notion of Church discipline.

But suppose a sin has been committed for which a brother **should** be disciplined—in what manner shall the brethren proceed to do this?

The Lord Jesus says: **"If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone."**

The Lord Jesus addresses these words to you, O Christian. And what does He say to you? First He says: "If **thy brother** shall trespass." You should bear in mind —Jesus bids you do so—that the sinning one, who is in danger of being lost, is your brother, your dear brother. Your heart should be aglow with loving concern for him. The Lord Jesus says: "If thy brother shall trespass **against thee.**" If the trespass of your brother has been committed against your person, if he sins against you, does you an evil turn, so that you have a thorough knowledge of his sin; or if in some other way you have positive knowledge of his sin—: what shall you then do? Be "mad at" him? Or despise him, reject him, condemn him? Or decry him to the people, so they will point the finger of scorn at him? Oh, no, nothing of that sort. Why, he is your brother, you are to love him, as you already know. What are you to do? The Lord Jesus says: "Go." You are not to say, if he has sinned against you: Let him come to me. You are not to say, if so be that you have positive knowledge of his sin: What is that to me? You shall go to him in loving haste. And what shall you do when there? The Lord Jesus says: **"Tell him his fault between thee and him alone."** You shall tell him his fault. What does that mean? With all earnestness, but that earnestness tempered with love and humility, and, hence, with all gentleness, you shall seek to convince him of his sin and of the danger he is in of being lost. But

this you shall do between you and him alone. The Lord knows whereof He affirms. It is not good to have other people present. That would shame him in a manner that would not prove salutary. That would also serve to make his sin public in an undue manner. And if your brother does not readily yield to your admonition, if he even behaves unseemly, do not let that deter you, but try, try again, try as long as you may have any hope that he will hear you and repent and turn from his way!

And if he finally hears you, what then? **"If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother,"** says the Lord Jesus. Then you have saved your brother from perdition. Oh, what joy! Oh, the moment you notice that your brother is hearing you, be sure and show him great love and speak assuring words of heavenly comfort to him; but don't lecture him and belabor him with pompous admonitions! Why, if you have gained your brother, all is well and may be you can advance him on the right road, him, your dear brother.

But if your brother utterly refuses to hear you, if he stubbornly insists that his sin is no sin, or if he persists in his sin, what shall you do then? Shall you then drop the matter and give your brother up, as far as you are concerned? No, not so. The Lord Jesus says: **"If he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established."** Choose one or two good, experienced, and impartial Christian brethren, have them accompany you to your erring brother and aid you in dealing with him as Christians should. It will carry great weight if he hears the same thing from others that he has heard from you. He may be prejudiced against you, may not be willing to "take anything" from you. And you, you may, especially if your brother's trespass was committed against you personally, you may be somewhat lacking in the clearness of vision and in the calm wisdom that

springs from love, in your dealing with your brother; may you not? For this reason it is well that every word be established. And in the mouth of two or three **witnesses** shall every word be established. For if your brother now hears you and your companions, all is well, to be sure. But if he neglects to hear you—what then?

The Lord Jesus says: **"If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church."** Which Church? The Church to which your erring brother belongs. This may be the Church to which you also belong, or it may be another orthodox Church which is governed by the Lord Jesus' word. This congregation then shall deal with your erring brother. But in order hereto it is necessary that every word and the whole matter, the brother's offence and the entire proceedings hitherto carried on, be established, not in your mouth alone but in the mouth of two or three witnesses. A christian Church dare not take up an accusation against any of its members, except the accusation be supported by the testimony of more than one person.

How shall the Church deal with your erring brother? First, we should say, the Church shall deal with him through its called minister, through its pastor and spiritual adviser, who is also the pastor and spiritual adviser of the offending brother, and to whom you first repaired in order to **tell** the Church. And if your brother hears his pastor, why, then all is well. But if he refuses to hear him, the Church vestry, we presume, will have to deal with him. And if he also refuses to hear the vestry, the Church shall summon him before its assembly, shall summon him to appear at a meeting of its voting members, and shall deal with him in a Christian, brotherly, friendly way, yet withal in a very earnest way, very earnest, indeed. For consider how long he has now been hardened, how long he has resisted the Spirit of God working at his heart in the words of reproof and convic-

tion that have been spoken to him? But if now he hears, he has, nevertheless, been gained, and is again become your dear brother.

But if he also neglects to hear the Church, or even goes so far as to refuse to listen to what the Church has to say, if he refuses to come to the meeting, if he proudly and defiantly turns his back to the Church and says: I have done with the Church, what then? The Lord Jesus says: **"If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."** Then he is, aye, he is a heathen and a publican, an unbeliever, an unrighteous man, a sinner that has fallen from the Christian faith. This is true beyond the shadow of a doubt. For the Lord Jesus says that you shall now regard him as such. Would the Lord Jesus say that if it were not so? Carefully weigh the following: Man never has it in his own power to believe, but always he is indebted for his faith, both in its first beginnings and in its continuation and preservation, to the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit working through the Word. And of this working and work of the Holy Spirit the Lord Jesus has a thorough knowledge, yea, it is His handiwork; and the Lord Jesus knows and wills and says that this work of the Holy Spirit's grace, and the whole operation of His grace, ceases when your sinning brother offers resistance to it in three stages, to-wit: when he neglects and refuses to hear you, your witnesses, and his Church. For in speaking of the third stage the Lord Jesus says: "If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." Hence he then is, as we have said, a heathen and a publican, indeed. We cannot understand how, after all three stages of Church discipline have been applied according to Christ's precept without the desired result, some Christians will, in spite of these words of the Lord Jesus, refuse to regard the offending brother as a heathen and a publican and will contend that there still may be at

least a spark of faith remaining in him. Do these people think themselves wiser than the Lord Jesus? We do not think that, they say, but there is a possibility that in all three stages of the disciplinary process the offending brother was not dealt with with entire wisdom, and therefore there still may be some faith in him; had he been thus dealt with, things might have turned out differently. But this objection does not alter matters. Entire wisdom we are never possessed of. And the Lord Jesus knows this. And still He says: "If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." But in one respect all error must be precluded if you are to rightfully regard your brother as a heathen and a publican: he must be guilty of a **sin,** a manifest sin against the plain Word of God, a sin that is bound to prove disastrous to his faith. If no such sin has been committed, the whole procedure is null and void. But if such a sin has been committed, the offending brother is a heathen man and a publican, if in three stages of Church discipline he refuses to repent and mend his ways. You need not be a searcher of hearts to be sure of that. You are to believe the Lord Jesus, who says: "If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

And the Church, his Church, which he will not hear, shall likewise let him be unto her as a heathen and a publican. And every Church and every Christian shall regard and treat him as a heathen and a publican. To be sure! If the Lord Jesus says that you shall let him be unto you as a heathen man and a publican, he surely is a heathen man and a publican, and all Christendom should regard and treat him as such.

But the Church to which he belongs and which he will not hear shall do still more. It shall **excommunicate** him. What does that mean? It shall retain his sins unto him and exclude him from the Christian Church and close

the gates of heaven against him. And seeing the Church does this thing in the name and at the command of the Lord Jesus, such action is valid in heaven. Hence the Lord Jesus now adds: **"Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven."** By "bind" the Lord Jesus means in the first place: to retain the sins of; for later on He expresses the same thought in these very words: "Whosesoever sins ye retain they are retained." John 20: 23. And in the second place to "bind" means to exclude from the Christian Church; for in speaking of Excommunication St. Paul says: "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person." I Cor. 5: 13. In the Christian Church the forgiveness of sins **is the thing** that is being dealt out to the people continually. How, then, can a heathen man and publican, whose sins are not forgiven but retained, remain in the Church? And in the third place to "bind" means: to lock the gates of heaven against; for in another place the Lord Jesus uses this very word in speaking of the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven with which the Kingdom of Heaven is locked. Mt. 16: 19. And this is called Excommunication. This is the last step that can be taken and the extreme measure that shall be employed upon the offender to save him.

The offender shall be notified of this his excommunication and public notice thereof shall be given the entire Church by the called minister of the Word. In the first place the offender shall be notified. Why? For what purpose? That the offender may know what extreme measure has been employed upon him, that he may be pricked in his heart, that he may be terrified and be led by the grace of God to repent, "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." 1 Cor. 5: 5. For even this extreme measure is not intended for the perdition of the lost brother but for his salvation. Let every Christian understand this well. In the second place

public notice of the excommunication shall be given the entire Church. Why? For what purpose? That every Christian in the Church may know what extreme measure has been employed upon the offender, that every Christian may treat him accordingly and have no Christian fraternal fellowship with him. If Christians in the congregation treat the excommunicated person as if nothing had happened; if they join him in prayer, or, to say something quite different, invite him to their homes or accept invitations from him and eat and drink and play cards and make merry with him: is not that bound to overcome and undo what impression may have been made upon him; isn't he bound to think the whole matter of little consequence and to refuse to take it seriously? Is that seeking to save a lost soul? No, that tends to make the soul careless of its lost condition, tends to harden it therein and make it secure and advance it farther and farther on the road to everlasting destruction. O Christians, be mindful always of that which is right and pleasing to God!

But what if the offender fails to appear before the Church, what if he gives the Church no opportunity to deal with him, declaring that he wants nothing more to do with the Church? In that case, indeed, he cannot really be excommunicated. In that case he has excluded himself from the Church and the latter has nothing more to do with him. But the Church shall, through its pastor, give public notice that he, being a manifest and impenitent sinner, has excluded himself from the Church, and every Christian shall regard and treat him as a heathen and a publican and shall treat him precisely as if he were excommunicated. For seeing he even refused to hear what the congregation had to say to him, the Word of the Lord surely applies to him: "If he neglect to hear the church let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

If, by the grace of God, an excommunicated person re-

pents and is converted, if he confesses his sin and amends his ways, what then? Then the Church shall **absolve** him. What does that mean? It means, the Church shall release him from the bonds of excommunication, it shall remit his sins unto him, forgive him, and again receive him into the Church, and unlock the gates of heaven to him. And seeing the Church does this in the name, and at the command, of the Lord Jesus, such action is valid in heaven. Wherefore the Lord Jesus says in conclusion: **"And whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."** And if he who has excluded himself from the Church returns, a penitent, the Church shall deal with him in the same manner; only in such case the Church cannot be said to loose him from the bonds of excommunication, since he was not actually excommunicated. And in both cases the Church shall give public notice of the matter through the pastor. And every Christian shall lovingly receive the penitent one as a brother that has been regained. And thus Church discipline, exercised to the full, will be seen to have achieved its real purpose.

Of the excommunication of a sinner you may read I Cor. 5, and of his reinstatement in the Church II Cor. 2: 6-11.

God grant that true Church discipline be exercised in every orthodox Church!

XXI. On Doctrinal Discipline.

1. What do we mean by "doctrinal discipline"?

We mean the Christian discipline which should be exercised in a Christian congregation, and in the larger and smaller divisions of an entire Church body, in order to keep the unity of the faith and of the true doctrine of God's Word.

The Apostle Paul writes by the Holy Spirit: "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Eph. 4: 3-6. And again he writes: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." I Cor. 1: 10. And again: "I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." Rom. 16:17. And again: "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." Tit. 3: 10-11. And of such heretical people St. Peter writes: "There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of

you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not." II Pet. 2: 1-3.

What do these words of God teach us?

This:

When God has graciously given us Christians unity of the Spirit, when God has given us spiritual unity, unity wrought by the Holy Spirit, we should studiously and zealously endeavor to keep this inestimable treasure of spiritual unity by twining the bonds of peace about us and by forbearing one another in love with all lowliness and meekness and longsuffering. And what is such unity of the Spirit? Wherein does it consist? In this, that we are one spiritual body; in this, that we have one Spirit which is governed by the Holy Spirit by means of the Word; in this, that we are called of God and converted unto one and the self-same everlasting hope; in this, that we have one Lord Jesus Christ and one and the self-same faith in the Word and one and the self-same Baptism, by which we have fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ; in this, that we have one God and Father of us all who reigns over us all and works through us all and dwells in us all. Thus this unity of the Spirit, this spiritual unity, this unity which is wrought by the Holy Spirit, is, in its inmost being, a unity of **faith;** for everything that has here been said about it is a matter of faith; besides, faith is expressly mentioned. And being a unity of faith, it is a unity of **doctrine** and, indeed, of the true and pure doctrine of the Word of God, for this, and this alone, is the foundation of faith. The Christians then shall endeavor to keep the unity **of the faith and of the pure doctrine of the Word of God.** This is what our first passage says, Eph. 4: 3-6.

And in order to keep this unity of faith and doctrine, which God has given us, we are commanded—in matters of faith and doctrine—to "all speak the same thing." What does that mean? It means that we are to assert

and manifest the unity, actually existing in us, and are to give clear expression to it, in our speech. How? In what manner? First by so speaking, every one of us in matters of faith and doctrine, that all the brethren will see at once: Why, that is our belief, that is our doctrine! And then by owning and confessing and treating one another as brethren in the faith without any reservation or limitation, external differences, and such as do not pertain to the faith and doctrine, notwithstanding. We are to allow no divisions among us where in reality and in God's sight there are none. In matters of faith and doctrine we should not employ speech that is singular, that sounds queer and strange to others, and that might arouse a suspicion that we have deviated from the right way. We should not so give preference to this or that orthodox teacher of religion, and to his peculiar ways and methods, as to thin slightingly of, and to separate from, those who are following the leadership of other orthodox teachers and are faring well under such leadership. We should not attach such importance to churchly customs and ceremonies as to look askance at Churches or Synods which differ from us in these things. We should not allow membership in this or that orthodox Synod to lead to a partisan spirit, should not be given to quarreling and wrangling. No. We, who are one in faith and doctrine, should faithfully and firmly hold together ("be perfectly joined together") in one mind, girt up in the truth of God, and in one judgment, determined and shaped by such truth. This is what the Apostle, in our second passage quoted above, I Cor. 1: 10, does faithfully and earnestly, "by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," beseech us to do.

But if in our congregation, or in the Church body to which we belong, there be found any who would proclaim and introduce any doctrine that is false and contrary to the Word of God; who would, therefore, cause divisions and dissensions in faith and doctrine and would offend and

perplex and mislead simple-minded Christians, so that these will no longer continue with one accord in the unity of the true faith and pure doctrine of the Word of God, which they have learned—what are we to do in such a case? We are to mark such people, point them out and brand them as unorthodox, as deceivers and disturbers of the true unity of faith and of the pure doctrine of God's Word, and if, in spite of all admonitions, they persist in their preverse and wicked mind and way, we are to avoid them, renounce them, and separate from them. This is what our third passage teaches us. Rom. 16: 17.

But what, in reality and in the worst sense of the word, are "heretical" people? Heretical people are false teachers who introduce, and with feigned and fraudulent words smuggle into the Church of God damnable teachings and heresies, even denying the Lord Jesus Christ, who has bought them with His blood, and speaking evil, and causing others to speak evil, of the only saving faith. And heretical people are they who follow such false teachers and their pernicious ways, their ways which lead to damnation. And what is the judgment of God concerning heretical teachers? That they will bring upon themselves swift destruction, that their judgment is framed this long time and will not linger, that their damnation slumbereth not. And what is the judgment of God concerning those who follow heretical teachers? That they are subverted and that they sin, being condemned of themselves. And what are we to do with heretical people, with the deceivers and with the deceived? If they be found within our communion and Church, we are to admonish them at first and second time, and, if this be vain, we are to reject them. This is what our last two passages teach us, Tit. 3: 10-11 and II Pet. 2:-1-3.

2. In what manner shall discipline be exercised upon such as are teachers or followers of false doctrine?

They are to be admonished repeatedly. If such admonition is vain, Church fellowship and fraternal relations with them are to be discarded.

This is a general rule.

We shall first show how it applies to cases in which the false doctrine adhered to **is not necessarily fatal to saving faith.**

By this we mean false doctrine which leaves intact the doctrine of the Three Articles of the Christian Creed and therefore the doctrine that a poor sinner is justified in the sight of God, and saved, out of pure grace through the merit of Christ, alone by faith,—this doctrine not being denied but being confessed.

As long as a man does not deny, but freely confesses, this, the heart and core of the Christian religion, there well may be in his heart a true and living faith, even though buried, as it were, beneath much rubbish of false doctrine in other points. Such a person may merely be **in error** respecting other portions of the Christian doctrine; he may, indeed, be stark blind and utterly besotted with such error, yet without any thought of opposing himself wilfully and wantonly, and therefore in a manner necessarily fatal to saving faith—to God and His plain Word. And notwithstanding such person is associated with the orthodox Church and continually hears the pure doctrine—for of such persons only do we speak—he may have fallen into such error and become blind and besotted therewith through vain curiosity, prompting him to read sectarian papers, through unduly attending unorthodox churches, through constant intercourse with unorthodox people, through a strong prejudice in favor of this or that

false doctrine, dating perhaps from past association with some unorthodox church, through consulting with and weighing matters in the balance of his depraved reason and discussing them with unorthodox people, possibly also through inadequate and faulty counsel, given him by his orthodox brethren, and finally, perchance, through a defective knowledge of the Word of God and through mental and spiritual incapacity for sound judgment.

Now, if such a person be found in an unorthodox **congregation,** his brethren shall, with all fidelity and with all longsuffering and doctrine, point out his error to him in the light of God's Word and shall admonish him again and again to discard such error and embrace the truth. And this they shall do in the order laid down Mt. 18: 15-17, unless the erring brother has already given wide publicity to his error and endeavored to gain a following for it. In this case he shall forthwith be reproved before all, like one who has sinned openly, "that also the others may fear" and not follow him. I Tim. 5: 20. But even such public reproof shall be administered repeatedly with all longsuffering and doctrine. And if these dealings with the erring person do not clearly and unquestionably establish the fact that he is a wilful and wanton despiser of God and His Word, he, even though he cling to his false doctrine, cannot be regarded as a heathen and publican, neither can he be excommunicated in the real, full sense of the word. For a child of God, though ever so persistently and hopelessly in error—and such the person in question may be—we cannot regard as a heathen and publican, we cannot excommunicate. But Church fellowship and fraternal relations with him must, if he continue in his error, be discarded. For an orthodox Church cannot unite within its confines Christians who are divided in faith and doctrine; it cannot tolerate such as teach false doctrine touching any point of the Word of God, or are given to such doctrine and even seek to gain a following for it.

Such people Christians are to avoid (Rom 16: 17). That means in this case that the Church shall say to them: You may be Christians, but you are not orthodox Christians, you are heterodox; you are not of us; you cannot remain with us. And thus they must leave the orthodox Church, or, if they refuse to do this, they must be put out. Lo and behold, followers of Christ: Can they remain in an orthodox Church who teach false doctrine, who do not believe, do not accept but do reject, yea, perchance, do combat, both publicly and privately, to the offense of many, such teachings of the Word of God as the pastor proclaims in his sermons, as the children learn in school, as the congregation sing into their hearts from the hymn book and read in books of sermons and of devotion and in the Church papers, for their edifying? Why, that were a veritable outrage upon the unity of faith and doctrine which God in His Word so earnestly demands. Should, however, which God forbid, the congregation as such refuse to take the steps that God enjoins in such a case, the true Christians would be obliged to withdraw from such congregation.

And if such persons be found beyond the confines of one's congregation, **in the orthodox Church body to which one belongs, or with which one affiliates,** in one's own Synod or in a Synod which a common faith unites with one's own Synod, it becomes the business of every Christian to see to it that such persons have their error pointed out to them in the light of God's Word and that this be done again and again in all fidelity and with all long-suffering and doctrine, and that they be admonished to forsake their error and embrace the truth. And this shall be done or be caused to be done by them on whom it devolves. And if all that could be done have been done in vain, if the persons in question persist in their error, Church-fellowship and fraternal relations with them shall be discarded. Yet they shall not be regarded and treated

as heathen and publicans. The same shall be done with the following they may have acquired. And if an entire Synod espouse their cause, Church-Fellowship and fraternal relations with such entire Synod shall be discarded. And if one's own Synod espouse their cause, one shall sever one's connections with such Synod and all orthodox Christians and Churches shall do the same.

These are hard and trying matters, indeed. But Christians must stand by the Word of God and keep the unity of faith and of the pure doctrine of the Word of God at any cost.

We shall now take into consideration false doctrines **which are necessarily fatal to saving faith.**

By this we mean false doctrine whereby the Lord Jesus is denied and the only way of truth is evil spoken of, hence false doctrine which does not leave intact the Three Articles of the Christian Creed and which substitutes righteousness of works for the righteousness of faith.

This is heretical doctrine in the proper sense of the word.

It is not possible that he that is given to such doctrine should merely be in error. Who teaches such doctrine, or is given to such doctrine, has fallen from his faith.

This is the doctrine of most modern theologians and preachers; these are heretics, whatever other names they may go by notwithstanding.

If a person given to such heretical doctrine be found in an orthodox **congregation** he shall be disciplined to the full extent of Mt. 18: 15-17, as was explained in Ch. XX.

If a teacher of heresy be found in **an unorthodox Church body,** there shall be no peace until Tit. 3: 10-11 has been complied with, and the offender shall be so regarded and judged as St. Peter judges him, II Pet. 2: 1-3.

XXII. On Suspension from the Lord's Supper.

1. What do we mean by "suspension from the Lord's Supper"?

We mean the refusal of the Lord's Supper to a member of a Christian Church, pending further developments.

2. Who shall be thus suspended from the Lord's Supper?

In the first place, he who is undergoing Church discipline. In the second place, he who has committed a sin and thereby given public offense and who, though penitent, has not yet publicly made amends. In the third place, he who by, or without any fault of his own, has exposed himself to suspicion and has not yet cleared the suspicion away. Lastly, he whose unworthiness to receive the Sacrament was revealed to the pastor at, or just before, the time he announced his desire to partake of it.

As long as a Church member is being disciplined there is a sin upon him which is fatal to saving faith. It goes without saying that during this time he must be suspended from the Lord's Supper. Not until he has repented and given assurance of his faith may he be admitted to Communion.

But here a question arises. It pertains to the first and second stages of discipline. In these stages it may be that the spiritual condition of the offender is unknown save to the admonishing brother and his witnesses. The pastor and the congregation may be utterly in the dark

with respect to it. Now, what if, in one of these stages, the offender should not only refuse to hear, but should even boldly insist upon going to the Lord's Supper? This not seldom occurs. In such case the knowing ones should take the pastor into their confidence and protest against the offender's admission to the Sacrament.

If a brother has committed a sin and thereby given public offense, but is now penitent, he is, of course, a child of God's grace. But he has a sacred duty to perform, as yet, toward the congregation. He must undo the offense he has given, by a public confession. Can he be penitent and at the same time refuse to repair the spiritual injury he has done? Can he openly commune with the congregation while the latter is constrained to regard him as an impenitent? No, he cannot be admitted to the Lord's Supper until he has done his Christian duty. And if his repentance is sincere he will gladly and speedily do it.

Cases are not unknown in which a brother has exposed himself to the suspicion that he has committed a sin, or is living in a sin, while in reality such is not the case. And it may, or it may not, be his own fault. If, for example, a man has a bad wife, who is seeking to be divorced from him and, to this end, brings bad accusations against him, which, however, are not true; and if he makes no reply, he is thus by his own fault exposed to suspicion. But if, for example, a man be seen at a late hour coming out of a house of ill-fame into which he had rushed without knowing what sort of house it was, because he had heard a heart-rending cry for help proceed from such house, that man is exposed to suspicion without any fault of his own. Now, be the case as it may, a man exposed to suspicion in his Church shall not be admitted to the Lord's Supper until he has done what he can to clear the suspicion away. For as long as the suspicion is suffered to remain the thing is a public offense.

If a Church member announces to his pastor that he desires to partake of the Sacrament and if in the course of the conversation he makes remarks that clearly reveal his unworthiness or unpreparedness to receive the same, or if his unworthiness has been revealed to the pastor a short time previously, the pastor shall suspend the applicant from Communion pending further development.

3. Who has authority to suspend people from the Lord's Supper?

Properly and in reality this authority belongs to the Church, to the Church alone, not to the called minister. The latter must, therefore, be ready at all times to give account to the Church of what he is frequently obliged to do at his own discretion.

"This true Church of believers and saints it is to whom Christ has given the *Keys* of the Kingdom of Heaven and she, therefore, is the real and sole possessor and bearer of the spiritual, God given, heavenly treasures, privileges, powers, ministries, etc., which Christ has acquired and which are found in His Church." "The ministry does not constitute its incumbents a peculiar order, apart from the order of common Christians and of superior dignity and holiness, like the Levitical priesthood; but rather it is a ministry of service." "The minister has no dominion in the Church; he therefore has no authority . . . to decree and execute excommunication **all by himself**, without previous action to that effect by the entire congregation." (Walther, **Kirche und Amt.**) And suspension from the Lord's Supper is what is called "lesser excommunication," a temporary denial of the instruments of grace which God has given to Christians. Hence there can be no doubt that this authority properly and in reality belongs to the Church alone, not to the called ministers. It were a dreadful state of affairs and an intolerable specimen of

priest-domination if pastors could, by their own authority, and without the concurrence of their congregations, deny the Sacrament to Christians.

However, as we have said, there are cases in which people must be suspended from the Lord's Supper and yet previous action by the Church is not possible because of a lack of time. In such cases the called minister is constrained to act single-handed and upon his own responsibility; but at all times he must be perfectly willing to give account of his action to the Church. The best thing for him to do in such a case is to tell the person whom he is obliged to suspend, in a plain and straightforward manner, that the authority to suspend belongs to the Church alone, that he may, therefore, carry his case before the Church at any time. In this manner every semblance of priest-domination will be precluded.

XXIII. Four Questions Pertaining to Religious Fellowship with Unorthodox People.

1. **Ought orthodox Christians to take part in the songs and prayers and offerings of unorthodox churches?**

No.

The Apostle Paul writes through the Holy Spirit: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." Rom. 16: 17. And he writes: "Abstain from all appearance of evil." 1 Thess. 5: 22. So it is God's will that we **avoid** them that cause divisions and offenses in the Church of God by teaching doctrines contrary to the doctrine that we have learned from the Word of God And do not the unorthodox do this very thing? Hence we are commanded to avoid them. Now, if we take part in the songs and prayers of the unorthodox churches—and who knows what manner of songs and prayers are liable to be sung and said in these churches?!—and if we contribute money for their purposes, namely, for the maintenance and extension of the unorthodox church, do we then avoid them? Yea, do we not assume an appearance of evil, do we not appear to be in accord with them in the main. Do we not thus confirm the unorthodox in their error, and do we not give offense to such orthodox Christians as are weak, do we not thus betray these Christians into believing that there is no real and radical difference between the churches?

"But," I hear some one rejoin, "it does not look well to sit there like a dummy and neither sing nor pray nor drop anything into the contribution basket. It looks stiff, to say the least." So it does. But why do you go there? Why don't you stay away?

Oh, we do not mean to say that it is wrong to go to an unorthodox church now and then in order to see what such churches are like. But he that does go there, it behooves him to show that he does not belong to such churches. And to attend unorthodox services often, even habitually, this is wrong indeed, and it is done by such persons only as are not settled in their faith in the pure doctrine and it makes them more unsettled still.

2. May an orthodox minister preach in an unorthodox church?

If every appearance of his being the brother and substitute of the unorthodox pastor be abstained from, and if the latter in no wise officiate at the services, he may do so, if requested, in order to bear witness to the truth.

However, he must be careful lest orthodox Christians, and especially his own Church, take offense at such action. If there is any danger of such a thing, the idea must be abandoned.

3. May an orthodox Christian, when the guest of such as are not orthodox, join in the latter's prayers before and after meat?

While these are saying grace or giving thanks let him offer up a silent prayer on his own behalf. If they pray in a manner not in keeping with the Christian faith, let him utter his dissent.

Let us make the question more comprehensive, thus: **May an orthodox Christian in any case unite in prayer with such as are unorthodox?**

We reply: **By no means.**

Full well do we know, and we thank God for the fact, that there is a communion of saints which embraces both orthodox and unorthodox Christians and unites them, in humble and penitent faith in Jesus Christ, into one family of children of God. But in its outward appearing and works the orthodox Church is rigidly separate from the unorthodox. And so God wills it should be. "Avoid them." Rom. 16: 17.

But what is uniting in prayer, what is fellowship therein, and what should it be according to the will of God? A glance at the golden altar of incense will tell you. As on the golden altar of incense a multitude of living coals were heaped together in one and the selfsame fire, so a multitude of poor and penitent hearts, sanctified by the blood of Christ, shall unite in one and the selfsame faith of one and the selfsame Word of grace and of God, and shall offer up one and the selfsame incense-offering of supplication, prayer, intercession, and giving of thanks, unto the common Father. Can this be done by such as are **not** at one in the faith, **not** at one in the Word of grace and of God? Will God have **strange fire,** which was not taken from the one altar that stands before God, Lev. 16: 12, and **strange** incense, which God has not commanded? Will God have this put upon the fire and incense which God has sanctified by the offering of Jesus Christ and by His word? Ah, no. Read Lev. 10: 1-2, and Exod. 30: 9 and give them a New Testament interpretation.

Besides, it is foolish to do such a thing, as any sober-minded Christian can easily see. The following actual occurrence will serve to illustrate our point:

Only a few years ago a series of doctrinal discussions were held by representatives of the Synodical Conference, which, by the grace of God, is an orthodox Church body, and representatives of the Synods of Ohio and Iowa, which by their own fault are unorthodox church bodies.

The discussions were held for the purpose of establishing unity in the faith and doctrine. The Ohioans and Iowans demanded that the sessions be opened with prayer, to be spoken by the respective chairman. To this the representatives of the Synodical Conference refused to accede, saying that each participant should say his own prayers in silence. Great fault was found with such refusal and the refusers were publicly reproached in various church papers. Now, Christian reader, consider this matter a moment. What could the chairman have prayed for? If a member of the Synodical Conference, he could have prayed that the truth, as known and taught by the Synodical Conference, might win the day. Would the members of the Ohio and Iowa Synods have joined in that prayer? Or, if a member of one of these synods, he could have prayed that the truth, as taught by these synods, might win the day. Could the members of the Synodical Conference have joined in that prayer? Or he could, no matter which side he was on, have prayed in a general way that the truth might win the day, he might have left the question undecided, as to which side the truth was on. And Ohio and Iowa, of course, wanted the thing done in this way. But what would that have amounted to? Either each side would have prayed for its own view, which was opposed to that of the other side. And would the thing, in that case, really have been a joint prayer? No. On the contrary, it would have been the merest mockery. Unless—this is the only alternative—unless both sides were in doubt as to what the truth really was. Were the Ohio and the Iowa Synods thus in doubt? Were they in doubt whether their logical inferences really reach the truth? The members of the Synodical Conference were not in doubt. They knew the Word of God to be on their side. In fine, the members of the Synodical Conference refused to join in prayer with their opponents. And they did the right thing. Joint prayer would not only have been wrong; it would have been altogether foolish.

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4. Is it right for orthodox people to accept money from such as are not orthodox for the maintenance of the Church and for the extension of God's Kingdom?

It is not right to solicit money from such people for said purposes. But if they offer the money of their own accord, and without sinister motives, it may be accepted.

To solicit money, or let us say, to beg for money among unorthodox people for the purpose of building a church, or of raising the pastor's salary, or of providing for the Church's poor, or for its home or foreign missions—that certainly were displeasing to God, yes, it were a downright disgrace. The popish church, which claims to be orthodox, does this every day of the year. Shall we, who really are orthodox, shall we walk in her footsteps? The various sects do this thing, too. Far be it from us so to do! In obedience to the will of God, we avoid the unorthodox in everything that pertains to their churches. And when they ask us for money to help them build their churches, to help them raise their pastors' salaries, to help them provide for their poor and pay their missionaries, we tell them: We cannot do such a thing. And now **we** should ask **them:** Please give us some money so we can build our church, so we can raise our pastor's salary, so we can provide for our poor and pay our missionaries; Shame on us unprincipled beggars! Paul's injunction to the Thessalonians finds application here: "As touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more; and that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; that

ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing," (or: "of no man," as it says in a marginal reading; that is, that ye may have need of no man's aid). I Thess. 4: 9-12. In cases where aid really is needed, however, let us call on our brethren.

It sometimes happens that unorthodox people do, quite of their own accord, offer an orthodox Church a sum of money. It is hard telling what their motive is in so doing. Perhaps they have been impressed by the manifest sincerity of the people in the Church; perhaps the provision made for the Christian training of the children in the parish school has moved them. In such cases the money may be accepted with thanks. But it also happens that money is offered from other motives, which later on come to light in a most disagreeable manner. We recall one instance where a prominent lodge member, who was also a member of some sectarian church, presented a newly founded orthodox Church with a building site and also donated a sum of money for the erection of the Church building. The gift was accepted. But when the Church was finished the donator applied for membership in the congregation. The latter could not receive him. From that time on he has been the worst enemy of that Church and to this day he tauntingly tells it that he it was who enabled it to build its church. Wherefore, look before you leap!

XXIV. Three Questions Pertaining to the Ministry.

1. Is it right to say that he who enters the ministry makes a sacrifice?

By no means. The ministry is the highest and most remunerative office on earth.

If he who intends to enter the ministry or has already entered it—if he himself declares this step a sacrifice, it were better for him and for those whose minister he is, or is about to become, if he were to choose a different calling.

If others say such a thing about a person who intends to enter, or has already entered, the ministry, they speak foolishly and know not what the ministry is.

The ministry is the highest office on earth. It is the "dispensation," or stewardship "of God," that is, it is the office which God has instituted for the purpose of dispensing, or dealing out, the riches of His saving grace among men through the administration of the Means of Grace by those whom He has appointed His stewards. Col 1: 25. No other office is worthy to be compared to this office, not excepting the government, which, indeed, is likewise ordained of God. Rom. 13: 1. The ministry has to do with souls, which God has created, with poor, sinful souls, which Christ has redeemed with such a price! By means of the ministry the Holy Ghost would lead these souls to the faith, and would sanctify and keep them in the faith, and save them. What other office in the world can be compared to this office? It is the highest office on earth.

And it is the most remunerative office. It holds forth

the highest reward. He who administers this office faithfully in the ability that God gives him (1 Cor. 4: 1-2; I Pet. 4: 11) has the highest reward awaiting him. "They that be wise" [or: "teachers" (marginal reading)] "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Dan. 12: 3. Similar things indeed are said of the righteous in general (Mt. 13: 43), but of an office, of an office, nothing of the kind is spoken anywhere. True, this reward awaits faithful ministers in the eternal mansions. But isn't this thing the very highest reward even here on earth, yea, is not this thing its own reward, to be counted worthy of rescuing souls from death unto life, yea, to have that for one's office and calling?

Oh, we know, and freely admit, that there are offices in which one can make more money. But shall we gauge the greatness of an office by its opportunities for making money? We know, and freely admit, that a faithful minister is subject to a great amount of cross-bearing, vexation, care, and toil. But does that make the office so worthless that one may call the holding of it a sacrifice?

If a sacrifice, or offering, it must be called, then call it a "free-will offering" or sacrifice! Ps. 54: 6 (Revised Version). Call it a joyous sacrifice! (German Bible.)

Perish the mention of any other kind of sacrifice in speaking of one who is studying for the ministry, or is serving some congregation in the ministry, or is assigned to Brazil or India. The following story just came to our notice. A young Chinese girl had made a public profession of her faith and received holy Baptism, whereupon her teacher said to her: "I suppose you are very glad you had the opportunity to attend a school in which you learned to know your Savior?" "Indeed," she replied, "and I suppose you are very glad that you had the opportunity to come to China and teach us the Word that tells us about this Savior."

2. In what sense is the call of a pastor to his Church, and likewise a call extended to him by some other Church, "divine"? Accordingly, what must be avoided with respect to a call?

The call of a pastor to his Church is divine in the sense that God has made him pastor of that Church. The call extended to a pastor by some other Church is divine in the sense that God is calling him to this other Church. Hence the thing to be avoided with respect to a call is all manner of conferring with flesh and blood.

The Apostle Paul, by the Holy Spirit, said to the elders of the Church at Ephesus: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, **over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers,** to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Acts 20: 28. We do not claim that all of these elders were pastors in the sense in which the word is commonly used among us. But at all events they were overseers and it was their business to feed the Church of God at Ephesus. And that man whom we now call the pastor of a Church doubtless is likewise an overseer of this Church and it is his business to feed it. For this reason the statement applies to a present-day pastor that the Holy Ghost, and therefore God has made him pastor of said Church. True, God has not made him pastor of this Church by an immediate call, but rather by the mediate call of the Church itself. The elders of the Church at Ephesus likewise were not called immediately but mediately. Notwithstanding, the present-day pastor was made pastor of his Church by God no less than were those elders at Ephesus. And even though a pastor have managed to get his call through all sorts of disreputable dealing or the congregation have

gone about the matter of calling him in a way that is faulty: having obtained charge of the congregation and holding such charge, the pastor is divinely appointed and made pastor of that Church. Only let him be faithful and let the Church hear him and let both him and the Church pray God to forgive what they have done amiss with reference to the call. In this sense we say the call of a pastor to his Church is divine.

The Apostle Paul writes by the Holy Spirit: "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal" (=with). 1 Cor. 12: 7. Now, all that this statement says on the face of it is: The various members of the Church to whom God has given a variety of spiritual gifts shall not keep these gifts to themselves, they shall manifest the Spirit that is in them by employing His Gifts for the profit of all. For all that are in the Church are members of one body, which is Christ (v. 12, 13), and each member has need of the others (v. 21, 27). However, the body of Christ is not confined to this or that local Church, the whole Christian Church on earth is Christ's body. Thus all true Christians on earth are members of one body, and each member has need of the others. And thus, to come to the point at once, no pastor has a right to simply say: God has placed me here and here I shall remain and employ my spiritual gifts. And no Church that wants a pastor has need of saying with a heavy heart: Ah, if we but had So and So for our pastor! He has the very gifts of the Spirit that we are so sorely in need of. He could employ these gifts to so much greater advantage, to so much greater profit, here than he can where he is now. But he belongs to another Church and we have no right to think of him. No. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal," for the common good. Let the congregation which has such need of him call this pastor in the name of God. And he, if he sees the rightfulness of such call,

will be in duty bound to say: I shall come. And his Church, if it see the rightfulness of such call, will be in duty bound to say to him: Depart in peace. For "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." God is now calling this pastor to the other Church. In this sense the call extended to a pastor by another Church is divine.

And now let every man beware lest he interfere with the rulings of Providence in these matters because of any selfish considerations of flesh and blood!

We shall all first speak of the **pastor.**

What harm, methinks I hear some one say at the very outset, what harm can there be in helping matters along just a little? Has it not been said in this book that, once a pastor is settled in his charge, he holds his charge by divine appointment? Indeed. It has been said. And it has also been said that when one has obtained a charge in a wrong way he must ask God's forgiveness. Now are you going to do that for which, when you have done it, you will have to ask God's forgiveness, you hypocrite?

Now, let us take up some of these considerations of flesh and blood. We cannot parade them all before your gaze, for their are legions of them. We can only point out a few by way of example.

He who is not contented with the charge that God has given him, but desires to exchange it for a different one, he is not merely drifting toward considerations of flesh and blood, he is already entertaining such considerations. And from this point he easily drifts farther down the stream. He discloses his mind to his friends, that they may recommend him to some other Church. And if by means of such "wire pulling," or if independently thereof, there comes a call that seems more agreeable to him, he forthwith stamps such call "divine" and in a letter replete with expressions of that sort, which are, however, in violation of the second commandment, he notifies the calling

Church that he has accepted their call. Yes, it is a most contemptible case of conferring with flesh and blood when a pastor, either directly or indirectly, communicates with a shepherdless flock or with members thereof, and "calls attention" to himself. Or when, having received a call, he "looks over the field," carefully taking note of the salary, the parsonage, the work to be done, the social standing of the pastor, the situation in the parish, and according to his findings along these lines decides that the call **is,** or is **not,** "divine." Or when a pastor merely thinks, when he merely indulges a silent opinion—but these thoughts do not escape the notice of others—that with his attainments he surely can fill a larger and more important place. Sir, do you not think that God will manage to find you, if He entertains such an opinion of you? And do you not think that when, in your present place, you shall have done all those things that are commanded you, you still will have to say: "I am an unprofitable servant"? Luke 17: 10. Aye, do you think that in your present place, which God has given you, you really have done, or that you can do, all those things which are commanded you? The present writer has never come anywhere near doing that, nor has he ever been able to come anywhere near doing it.

We do not deny, by the way, that sometimes circumstances do justify a pastor in wishing to change his place, circumstances such as these: Utter inability to support one's family on the salary one is confined to; a total lack of opportunity to provide for the further education of one's children, especially of one's sons; chronic illness due to an untoward climate; the consciousness, upheld and intensified by the concurrent opinion of sensible friends, that, owing to certain peculiarities which one can hardly overcome, one is not well fitted for the particular charge one now has. Neither have we a right to blame, much less to condemn, a person if, under similar circumstances, he

takes steps toward securing a different call; if, for example, he confers with his president, or with his visiting pastor, or with other brethren in the ministry. However, we do believe, dear brother, that you would fare better far if you were to tell the thing that is gnawing at your heart to none but the living God, whose power is infinite and whose wisdom knows no bounds, who governs all the Church, and who is your dear Father. "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him." Ps. 37: 7. Ah, this is a precious saying.

However, as he is deserving of condemnation who confers with flesh and blood in obtaining, or in accepting, a call, even so is he who acts on the same principle in declining one.

We shall confine ourselves to just a few remarks on this point.

Suppose a pastor has a charge with which he is more than pleased. The congregation is very much attached to him. He enjoys God's blessing in his labors. Everything is in first-class order. He has a comfortable living. The parsonage exactly suits his taste. He feels at home in his conference. The situation of his parish is in perfect accord with his wishes. And now there comes a call! And what a call! The calling Church states its troubles. It is torn by dissensions and factional feelings. Its former pastor has been guilty of misconduct, or at least has made serious mistakes. Things are sadly in disorder. Church attendance is poor. The school is on the decline, perhaps on the very verge of collapse. The necessary funds are not forthcoming. New buildings are needed. The situation of the parish is not desirable. "Come and help us," the congregation cries. "Go and help them; God has given you the necessary talents," is the advice of faithful fellow-laborers. The pastor's heart grows heavy, his countenance falls. Shall he give up the bright sunshine for dark shadows? Shall he renounce peace and quiet for troubled and stormy

days? Shall he exchange happiness for unhappiness? No! He will decline the call. Will you? Really? That were conferring with flesh and blood. That were bowing to the latter's decrees. Do you know who it is that is calling you? He it is who can easily change light into darkness and darkness into light. Will you refuse to go?

Now we shall turn our attention to the **Churches.**

What considerations of flesh and blood shall they beware of in calling pastors?

These, for example:

Requiring first and foremost that their future pastor shall be a **young** man, that he shall have a pleasing appearance and pleasing manners, that he shall be a social leader, that he shall have considerable oratorical talent, coupled with a full, strong voice. But hold! A loud, clear voice is a necessity in a church of considerable size; for if the preacher cannot be understood of what benefit will his preaching be and what will become of the congregation?—that his family be small and able to live on a small salary; that he even have a reputation for being liberal in a measure and not too much inclined to be strict. This last named requirement is one that ought to arouse suspicion, and a man may possess all of these requirements and still not be what a pastor really should be, to-wit: a faithful, conscientious, experienced, well informed, and pious preacher and spiritual adviser, apt to teach and rightly divide the Word of truth. These, aye, these, are the qualifications a Church should seek in its pastor first of all.

And when a Church pays absolutely no attention to the faithful counsel and recommendations of the synodical president and hearkens only to what some incompetent person, or some one of its members, has to say in praise of this or that pastor—that Church is conferring with flesh and blood and is liable to come to grief. Likewise, when it arranges for trial sermons by the various pastors

it has under consideration. For neither will a single sermon suffice to show that he who delivers it is an able minister of the Gospel, nor are the members of a Church capable, on the whole, of weighing a sermon as carefully and intelligently as it ought to be weighed. There is danger of confining the attention to external features and non-essentials and of allowing these to determine one's choice. Besides, a conscientious pastor will never consent to offer himself for sale in such fashion. There can be no objction, however, to a congregation's seeking to ascertain whether the voices of its several candidates are such as its spacious church, if such it be, may require. On the contrary, such precaution is highly commendable.

What considerations of flesh and blood shall a Church beware of when its pastor is called away?

The Church must not be resolved from the very outset to keep its pastor. It must not say: No matter how urgent the call may be, we shall never give our pastor up. Such remarks may speak well for the pastor, but they are not right. Suppose God is calling the pastor—what then? It is true, the Church which the pastor is serving is his by divine appointment; of this there is no doubt, while it is wholly uncertain as yet whether it be God who is now calling him to the other Church. But this very thing it is the business of both pastor and Chuch to investigate with all care. "Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord." Eph. 5: 10. It is a poor policy to leave the will of God unheeded. It is a pernicious indulgence of considerations of flesh and blood.

Now, whereby shall the will of God be known in such a case?

It will not do to say: Our pastor is universally beloved among us; therefore it is God's will that he continue with us. Such universal love is a very unstable thing. Like the weather, it may change over night, as experience abundantly proves. It will not do to say: Rich blessing

has attended the work of our pastor here in our congregation; therefore it is God's will that he continue with us. It may be God's purpose henceforth to confer just such blessing upon the other congregation through the labors of this pastor—may it not? It will not do to say: Our Church is larger than the one now calling him; therefore it is God's will that he continue with our Church. God does not figure that way. Besides, He can easily make larger that which is small, and smaller that which is large. It will not do to say: Our pastor, just as he is, is urgently needed among us; therefore it is God's will that he continue with us. May not the other Church have still greater need of him, far greater need of him, just as he is?

And here we have arrived at the very thing by which the will of God shall be known. It is the relative **need.** With an eye to the relative need, let the call be taken under consideration. If the pastor be more needed in the Church that is calling him than in the one he is serving; if the need of a pastor there be greater, more urgent, more crying, and—maybe—more extensive, extending over a wider field; if it be evident that the pastor can be of greater service, that he can do more for the upbuilding of God's Kingdom, there than he can where he now is; then let his present Church know that God is calling him in the call of the other Church, and let it say to him: Depart in peace. Thus his Church will be doing the will of God, will not be conferring with flesh and blood, much less obeying its precepts. But if no such need is to be discovered, then let his Church know that God is not calling him, let it say to him: Continue thou with us. Thus again it will be doing the will of God, and will not be conferring with flesh and blood. And it will have the first claim upon its pastor. "For the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." 1 Cor. 12: 7.

Moreover, if you see such greater need in the Church that is calling your pastor, it will not do to say: If we give up our pastor, we may get into the same straits they are now in. To speak thus were to indulge considerations of flesh and blood. God is able, and God is sure, to provide abundantly for them that do His will.

And if a Church fears the excitement, the annoyance, the trouble, the expense, that may attend the calling of another pastor, and for this reason refuses to let its present pastor go, it is guilty of grossly indulging considerations of flesh and blood and is bound to suffer for it.

Many more things might be said with regard to the calling of a pastor. But we believe we have answered in the main the question that were put to us.

Ah, this is a delicate thing, and a holy thing withal, yea, it is a heavenly thing, and divine! And we are sorry to say that flesh and blood are very much conferred with in handling it.

3. Does it behoove a pastor to take an active interest in the financial affairs of his Church? And if so, in what manner shall he do it?

He shall see to it that absolute order shall prevail in the taking in and paying out of the Church's funds and that all dealings shall be honest, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

Money is needed for the maintenance of the Church. And it is a sad state of affairs when money needed for this purpose is wanting. However, in many cases such want results from a lack of due order in the taking in and paying out of the Church's funds. In the taking in of this money: The members of the Church are not made to see clearly their sacred, yes, their sacred, duty to contribute toward the maintenance of the Church according to their ability. Some members are overlooked entirely;

the collectors and treasurers are not the men for their places, they are exacting and inclined to legalism, or they are either timid and shy or careless; there is no real system in the matter; no one has a clear idea of how much money is needed and how much may be expected. The whole thing is left to chance. In the paying out: The money on hand is disposed of without regard to the very first and most urgent needs ,to-wit: the salaries of the pastor and the teachers; debts are lightly contracted without any one's knowing definitely how they shall be paid—poorly governed Churches very easily acquire this habit, as Church debts are not looked upon by the individual members as personal debts; the treasurers pay out what they happen to have on hand and whenever they happen to have it; the treasurer's reports at the end of the year are confused and have to be taken in good faith. But the shortage is plainly there and makes itself felt. And one of two things must be done: either a special effort must be made to make up the shortage, or expenses must be cut down that ought not to be cut down. And this has a bad influence upon the Church: The members get dissatisfied or they get careless, indifferent. The officers of the Church get discouraged. Aye, a blight falls on the Church in its every department. And all this is the result of a lack of order in the Church's money matters. And this lack of order is due, as has already been indicated, to the fact that the Church is poorly governed. The pastor's motto seems to be: "We should worry."

Most assuredly it behooves the pastor to take an active interest in "the financial affairs" of his Church! He shall see to it that absolute order shall prevail in the taking in and paying out of the Church's funds.

In genuine evangelical fashion, it behooves him to awaken in the Church, and to keep awake and active, a consciousness that every member of the Church ought to give gladly and generously of his temporal and earthly

goods to the end that the eternal and heavenly blessings which God has graciously given may be duly preserved and administered in the Church. It behooves him to see to it that every wage-earner be asked for his or her contribution. In large city Churches the pastor probably is the only person that knows who these wage-earners are and where they live. Hence it behooves him to keep lists of these persons and to see that these lists are correct and up to date. It behooves him to direct his efforts toward the election of suitable and capable men to the positions of collectors and treasurers. It behooves him to see to it that a real and simple system be adopted to facilitate the work of collecting for the Church. We shall not undertake here to determine which system is the best. We believe that any system is good if it be firmly adhered to. The finished and corrected list it behooves the pastor to hand to the collectors and treasurers and to see to it that each of these persons gets the right list. And unless he can find a thoroughly competent and reliable man to superintend the whole work with the utmost accuracy and fidelity, it behooves him to do it himself. This requires work. But what of that? That is what he is here for, to work. And by economizing his time he can accomplish a great deal without overworking himself. And the benefit the Church will derive from such orderly management of its financial affairs will be just as great as the harm that will be thereby averted. Let no one, therefore, say that in attending to matters such as these a pastor will be doing a thing which, strictly speaking, does not pertain to his calling. I venture the remark that a pastor does many a thing which surely does not pertain to his calling in any wise.

As to the manner of holding and paying out the money, it behooves the pastor to see to it, and to insist upon it with firmness, that absolute order shall prevail in these matters, and that all dealings shall be rigidly honest, not

only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men: men shall see that such honesty prevails.

The collectors shall not carry around in their pockets for months the contributions of the members, but shall deliver them to the treasurers at regular and brief intervals, and the treasurers shall give them receipts. The treasurers shall not, under any circumstances, mix the money which has been delivered unto them and is not intended for immediate use with their own private funds, but shall deposit it in a bank which the Church shall designate, and shall deposit it as money belonging to such Church. The regular expenditures for salaries, etc., may be made by the treasurers without further action by the Church, but all other expenditures shall not be left to their discretion, nor to the discretion of the trustees, but shall be submitted to the Church for action. And the Church shall not live beyond its means. Let the most necessary things be acquired first, then the other things. If there be no funds on hand, let the Church raise the funds and then decide upon their expenditure. Let the Church keep out of debt! If we may be permitted the remark: The present writer has had many old debts paid off by his Churches, but not once has he suffered any of his Churches to contract new ones. And the Churches have fared well under this policy. There never has been a shortage, nor a lack of funds. There has always been a surplus. Not that we would utterly condemn the contracting of debts under any and all circumstances; there are times when debts cannot be avoided. But if debts be contracted let the contractors know exactly how they shall be paid, and let them pay them. The contracting of debts for things that are not necessary, as, for instance, for the building of elaborate and fancy churches, we heartily condemn; and we make this statement at the risk of exciting some people's displeasure.

And at least once a year let the treasurer make a pub-

lic report. Before this report is made the person that superintends the work of the collectors should satisfy himself that every member of the Church has been asked for his contribution and should ascertain whether the contribution has been made and whether all the money that has been subscribed and given to the collectors has been turned over to the treasurers. And then the collectors shall make their public report in the presence of the whole Church. And such report shall cover all receipts and expenditures, every item thereof. And then let the Church appoint a committee of competent men who shall revise the whole report, item for item, in a thoroughly businesslike manner: receipts and expenditures, the collectors' slips and books and receipts, and the treasurer's books and receipts and bank-books. And then let this committee report its findings to the Church.

Let the pastor insist upon such orderly management of the Church's financial affairs with all firmness. Where the people are not accustomed to such things there is at first a tendency here and there to see in them a mark of distrust, and some have been known to become indignant and even to weep. But let the pastor be firm. Such orderly management is in perfect accord with the Word of God. The Apostle Paul, when he would have had his own son in the faith, even Titus, take up a collection in the Churches of Macedonia for the poor brethren in Judea, he sent a well known and highly esteemed brother with Titus, as a witnesss, yes, and he also sent another man of the same character. Moreover, when Paul himself, and his companions, took this collection to Judea, the aforementioned first named brother was delegated by the Church to accompany Paul as a witness. Why all this ado? Because Paul and Titus were not trusted? No, indeed! Paul himself tells us why this was done: "Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: providing honest things, not only in

the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men." II Cor. 8: 20-21. (See v. 16-24.) Let every pastor explain these things to the people and ere long it will be hard to find a Church that will not rejoice to have its financial affairs managed in this way.

Only in cases the most extraordinary and only when absolutely no one else can be found that is able to do it, should a pastor himself take in the money contributed for the maintenance of the Church. And only in most extraordinary cases, and only when it seems very expedient and the Church requests him to do so, should he take in money for special collections. And we most earnestly recommend that he leave the collecting of dues for Church papers, books, and similar things to others if there be any possibility of so doing. But if he does take in any such money, let him **by all means** do the two following things: First, let him keep such money rigidly separate from his own money, and let him never, not even in the utmost need, borrow any of it for his own use, but let him deposit it in some bank and keep it there until he is able to send it to its destination. Personally he has absolutely nothing to do with this money. Personally he should regard this money as not existing. And the money taken in for special collections, let him send that to its destination with all fidelity and despatch. And the money received for Church papers and books, let him send it to the publishers at first opportunity; second, let him keep an exact account of all the money he has taken in, let him give receipts, demand receipts, and insist upon it that the Church, or persons whom the Church may appoint, revise his accounts with the most painstaking care.

Oh how much trouble we have seen in cases where pastors were not governed by these simple rules!

There was Rev. So and So. He had "borrowed" some of the money that had been committed to his care. Hav-

ing kept no exact account, he hardly knew how much he had borrowed, and when the money was due he was unable to forward it. As a result, he was accused of dishonesty, of pilfering, of stealing. Was that doing him an injustice? Hardly. When the employee of some sales-house does a thing like that what is he called? And what is done with him? He is certain to lose his position, and a term in the penitentiary is not beyond the range of possibility. Ought a pastor to be judged more leniently because he is a pastor and has dealt thus with the Church's money? We should say, on the contrary, that a pastor deserves even sterner justice.

And when a pastor who is altogether faithful and honest in the sight of his Lord does not keep exact account and have the accounts revised by men, he is very liable to painful suspicion and unkind remarks.

The devil spares no pains in his warfare against pastors.

XXV. On Charging Interest.

1. What does the term "interest" signify in the respectable business world of to-day?

It signifies the annual percentage, stipulated by contract in accordance with the law, which it is customary to pay on a loan made for a length of time likewise stipulated by contract.

A borrows $1,000 of B for a term of three years and binds himself by contract to pay B six per cent, or $60, per annum for the use of said $1,000 for said term of three years, till he shall have repaid the loan. This is what is called interest.

2. How does respectable business justify this charging of interest?

Thus: The lender deprives himself, for the stipulated time, of the use and benefit of his money, leaving it all to the borrower.

B who lends A $1,000, loses all use and benefit of these $1,000 of his during the time that A has the money. He cannot in any wise use this money of his for his own profit during the stipulated time. He cannot purchase anything with it. No matter how good an opportunity he may see to make a profitable investment, the money is not at his disposal. Yea, should an emergency arise and he find himself sorely in need of his money, his contract makes it impossible for him to obtain it. On the other hand, A, during the stipulated time, has all the benefit of this money, which belong to B. He can put his money to any use he may choose, for his own profit. He can purchase things with it. Given an opportunity, he can make a profitable investment. In any emergency he has

the money on hand. This is what B charges interest for: his depriving himself of the use and benefit of the money during the stipulated time and leaving all to A.

Another important fact that must not be overlooked in this connection is the following: In the modern business world money is no longer a mere medium of exchange and commerce, a mere means of reckoning values; it is itself, an article of exchange and commerce, it is a ware, a commodity, an article **having a value in excess of its nominal value.** And this excess value is represented by the interest. The interest on money loaned is, to-day, on a perfect level with the rent charged for a house or a farm. Thus things stand to-day. The character of money is different now from what it was in the day when our grandfathers stored their savings away in a trunk or kept them in an old stocking. It is only by conforming to this view, dictated by present conditions—it is only by conforming to this view, in theory and practice, that one is enabled to carry on any form of business to-day. Business to-day is built squarely upon this foundation. This all-important fact, determining, as it does, the character of money, one has to reckon with and therefore has to give and take interest.

Wherefore, as matters now stand, if B lends A $1,000 and charges the customary and legal rate of interest, he only takes what belongs to him and is his due, the same as house rent or farm rent. If, on the other hand, B lends A $1,000 without charging interest he simply **gives** A the sum of $1,000 are worth on the market above and beyond their nominal value, and he, himself, loses it. He does the same thing a man would be doing who were to allow his tenants the use of his house or farm without charging them rent.

Thus does the respectable business world of to-day justify the charging of the customary and legal rates of interest.

3. What do the respectable classes of to-day call usury?

When a man charges an exhorbitant and illegal rate of interest; when the lender, even when charging a legal rate, aims to take advantage of the temporary embarrassment of the borrower, in order to enrich himself at the latter's expense. In a wider sense: When capitalists buy up the whole supply of necessaries of life at comparatively low prices and then, by controlling the market, screw up the prices to an unwarranted height; and scheme whereby unscrupulous men manage to get large returns on small investments through the sweat and toil of others.

A, who is in dire need, or who is a spendthrift, comes to B to borrow $1,000. B takes advantage of A's need, or of his lightness, and, upon A's furnishing the necessary security that the loan will be repaid, B lends him the money at twenty per cent interest. However, to avoid coming in conflict with the law, B makes the contract to read at only six per cent, and either takes the remaining fourteen per cent in advance, deducting it at once from the $1,000, or in the contract he adds the fourteen per cent to the amount actually loaned. Thus B is a base usurer, a loan-shark.

Again: B lends A a sum of money at a legal rate of interest, upon the latter's furnishing the necessary security, for a period of one year. But B's shrewdness tells him that A will not be able by the end of a year to return the capital. And according as he deems it advantageous at the end of the year, B either extends the loan contract, in order to plunge A into still deeper need and embarrassment, or he demands repayment of the loan. And A, being unable to pay his debts, B, with the help of the law and to his own great advantage, attaches what

was given him as security. Thus again B is a contemptible and greedy loan-shark. Especially in high finance, there is a practice of lending money for an indefinite length of time, the money loaned being payable **on demand.** Whenever the lender sees that the borrower can by no means spare the money he demands it and ruins the borrower, to his, the lender's advantage. As for the borrower, it is true, he, as a rule, is merely being treated as he, himself, would treat others if he had the chance. This is a form of usury which any decent person will condemn.

In a wider sense, all those investments are called usurious which are made by the so-called captains of industry and by which these men manage to squeeze hundreds of per cent of profit out of their fellow-men by buying up, as stated above, the whole supply of the necessaries of life and then screwing up the prices to an unwarranted height.

There are also various ways of practicing usury on a smaller scale. To mention but a single example: N says to M: "Let us start up a business together." Here the business is specified. "I will furnish $2,500, you furnish the same amount, and we shall be partners. I however, do not wish to be an active partner, I wish you to conduct the business alone and am willing that you shall draw a salary of $100 per month. The net profit we shall divide equally between us." M accepts the proposition and the business is started. Thanks to M's skillful management and hard labor, the business thrives and flourishes and grows to such an extent that N and M each make an annual profit of one hundred per cent on their original investment. But N gets his one hundred per cent on his $2,500 without having done a stroke of work in the business, he gets it by the sweat and toil of M. For M works almost beyond endurance. Should N allow this

state of affairs to continue? He is more than willing. But that is usury in the highest degree.

This is what the respectable world nowadays calls usury.

4. What does the Bible call usury?

In the Bible usury[2] denotes any increase[1] over the amount or size of the loan, so that the lender requires the loan, be it money or money's worth, to be returned with increase, and thus gnaws at the borrower, worries and oppresses him.

To bear this statement out, we shall quote every passage of the Bible that treats of usury and shall consider these passages in the order in which we find them

First we meet with direct utterances of divine Law. These naturally form the basis for a correct understanding, and for determining the meaning, of all the remaining passages.

Exod. 22: 25 we read that God commanded Moses to set the following law before the people of Israel (Ch. 21: 1): "If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury." Here the case is supposed that one Israelite lends to another Israelite, to one that is poor and needy, a sum of money. In this case there are two things the lender shall not do. First, he shall not press the poor man to repay the money if this would injure him and make his need the greater. Then he shall not require the poor man to pay back **more than the loan,** and thus he shall not **oppress** him. It is simply this latter thing that is meant by **usury.** Luther

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1 תַּרְבִּית and מַרְבִּית from רָבָה Hiph. to make large, to increase.

2 נֶשֶׁךְ from נָשַׁךְ to bite, gnaw, worry, oppress.

comments upon this passage as follows: "To 'be as an usurer' and to 'lay usury upon' are two different things. To be as an usurer is to compel your neighbor to pay you what he owes you, to your advantage and to his disadvantage; what usury means, everybody knows."

Lev. 25: 35-37 we read that God commanded Moses to say to the children of Israel: "And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee; then thou shalt relieve him: yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner; that he may live with thee. Take thou no usury of him, or increase: but fear thy God; that thy brother may live with thee. Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase." Here the case is assumed that an Israelitish brother has grown poor and suffered reverses. Another Israelite knows and sees this. What shall this man do? He shall bring the poor man relief, just as he would take in a wandering stranger or a guest, and shall deal with him in such fashion that the poor brother may live with him. And what shall he **not** do to his brother who has grown poor? He shall not so lend him money and victuals as to **gnaw at him and worry him and oppress him, by requiring him to pay back more money or victuals than he lent him.** This is what is here meant by "usury" and "increase."

Deut. 23: 19-20 this statute and judgment is made for Israel: "Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of anything that is lent upon usury: unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury: that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand to in the land whither thou goest to possess it."

Israelites are here prohibited from gnawing at, from worrying and oppressing their fellow-Israelites by requiring them to return what they have borrowed, whether it be money or victuals or anything else, with increase or

profit. Unto a stranger,[3] that is, to one who neither belonged to the Jewish nation by reason of his extraction and religion, nor yet dwell within its gates as a sojourner[4] and adherent, but was of a different nation and religion and might even be a foe of Israel—unto such a one they might so do.[5] Here, then, no mention is made of the borrower's having grown poor, but it is laid down as a general principle that within the family of Israel the lender shall not **oppress** the borrower **with increase.** This is usury.

Neh. 5: 7, 10-11 we read: "Then I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. And I set a great assembly against them. I likewise, and my brethren, and my servants, might exact of them money and corn: I pray you, let us leave off this usury. Restore, I pray you, to them, even this day . . . the hundreth part of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil that ye exact of them."

Here we see how the law against usury was obeyed in Israel.

The people had returned from the Babylonian captivity and were rebuilding the city of Jerusalem under the leadership of Nehemiah. But they were in distress and they cried aloud. Those that were lowly and poor demanded corn for their large families. Property owners complained: "We have had to mortgage our lands, our vineyards, and our houses! For surely we must have grain in the dearth (famine)!" Still others complained that they had been obliged to borrow money to pay the king's tribute, and that upon their lands and vineyards, that they had been obliged to mortgage these and were now forced to deliver their sons and daughters into the hands of the men of wealth and of the nobles in Israel in order to ob-

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[3] נָכְרִי. [4] גֵּר. [5] Civil law of the Old Testament.

tain money to live on (v. 1-5). And all these complaints were directed against these very nobles and men of wealth, who not only failed to offer relief, but even took advantage of their brethren's distress to enrich themselves by taking mortgages and practising usury. When these complaints reached the ears of Nehemiah he was very angry and he rebuked the wealthy rulers and nobles, upbraided them for their hardness of heart, and called a mass-meeting (v. 6-7). In this meeting he accosted the nobles before the ears of all the people, reminded them of how he and others had redeemed their brethren, the Jews, from the hands of their heathen masters, and then pointed out to them with a very earnest rebuke what a great wrong they were doing, both in the sight of God and of men, in buying their brethren, as they were doing, and making them their bondsmen by these usurious practices. And the nobles were put to shame and had to hold their peace (v. 8-9). Then Nehemiah told them that he and his brethren and servants had likewise lent money and corn and he exhorted the nobles to follow their example by waiving all their claims and restoring the lands, etc., on which they held mortgages, and leaving off all interest (v. 10-11). When the nobles and men of wealth promised to obey his exhortation he had them solemnly swear that they would keep their promise. And by a symbolical act he indicated how God might grievously punish every one who would break his vow. And all the congregation said Amen and praised the Lord. The promise was kept (v. 12-13).

This is the connection—let it not be overlooked—in which the words quoted above occur.

We shall now seek to understand these words. And bearing this connection in mind, we shall have no trouble in so doing.

Rebuking the nobles and upbraiding them for their hardness of heart, Nehemiah said: "Ye exact usury, every

one of his brother." This expression to "exact usury" here means: to lend on charge, on loan-charge, and that on mortgage and interest combined. This is evident from the connection as shown above. The nobles made loans to the people on mortgage (of their real estate) and on the "hundreth part" (v. 11) on percentage, on interest. This is evident also from the Hebrew text. For the words which the English Bible, quite correctly, translates: to "exact usury," read in a literal translation: to lend on loan-charge.[6] And indeed the nobles, in this lending on loan-charge, took advantage, for their own gain, of the people's distress and gnawed at the impoverished masses and worried and oppressed them and bled them. This is here reproved as being usury forbidden by divine Law.

Then Nehemiah said: "I likewise, and my brethren, and my servants, might exact of them money and corn: I pray you let us leave off this usury." Here Nehemiah tells the nobles that he and they that were his have likewise lent[6] money and corn to their impoverished brethren and have thus become their creditors and might therefore likewise exact usury of them. But this, he says, they have not done. They have left off the loan-charge,[6] that is, the charging of mortgages and of interest, and he tells the nobles to do the same. This is here represented as a proper way of lending to the poor, a way conforming to the Law of God.

And Nehemiah took a firm hold of the usury-taking nobles and said: "Restore, I pray you, to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their oliveyards, and their houses, also the hundredth part of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them." He bade them restore to the people at once their mortgaged lands, etc., and also the interest they had already taken from them, and bade them leave off the interest and

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[6] נָשָׁאבּ (to lend to) מַשָּׁא (acc. on loan-charge). נֶשֶׁה

mortgages in the future. "That ye exact of them" means, literally: that ye have lent[6] them, with respect to which ye have become their creditors, and refers to the money, the corn, the wine, and the oil.

In passing, we shall say: This is the only place in the Bible where the increase over the loan is called "the hundredth part," just as interest is nowadays computed by the hundred (percentum). How many hundredths, how many per cent, are meant here cannot be clearly determined. It is commonly supposed that the nobles took one per cent each month and, therefore, twelve per cent per annum. We incline to the opinion that "the hundredth part" here designates the interest in a general way, without indicating the number of hundredth parts taken, just as if, for example, we should say: The per-cent, or percentage, on the loan, I will not require.

What is it now that Nehemiah, or rather God through Nehemiah, does throughout this passage brand and denounce as usury? This is more than evident, to-wit: **the practice of lending to such as are poor and oppressed and of taking from them, not only a mortgage or other security, but interest besides; thus gnawing at them, thus worrying and oppressing them, thus enriching one's self to their hurt.**

Now we come to a series of passages in which usury, as described and prohibited in the Law of God, is simply denounced.

Ps. 15: 5: "He that putteth not out his money to usury."[7] He that does not so lend his money as to take increase and thereby gnaw at his neighbor, thereby worry and oppress him, he shall abide in the Lord's tabernacle and dwell in His holy hill (v. 1).

Prov. 28: 8: "He that by usury[7] and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will

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[7]See Footnote No. 2.

pity the poor." Whoso by usurious and unjust gain increases that which is his, his substance will—such is God's wonderful providence—pass out of his possession into that of some person that is merciful to the poor, whom he has oppressed by his usury. (Compare Ch. 22: 16.)

Jer. 15: 10: "I have neither lent on usury, nor men have lent to me on usury; yet every one of them doth curse me." Thus the Prophet groans under the weight of his woe, which is come upon him along with the judgments of God that are being vented upon the impenitent people. And he says, he neither has lent,[8] nor has any one lent to him,[8] upon usurious interest that he either has demanded or **has failed to pay.** And yet, he says, every one curses him, just as men curse an insatiable usurer or a man who fails to pay his debts.

Ezekiel 18: 8, 9, 13, 17: "He that giveth not forth upon usury[9] neither hath taken any increase[10] . . . he is just, he shall surely live." (Who) "Hath given forth upon usury[9] and hath taken increase:[10] Shall he then live?" (He) "That hath not received usury[9] nor increase[10] . . . he shall not die."

Ezek. 22: 12: "Thou hast taken usury[9] and increase[10] . . . and hast forgotten me saith the Lord God."

The same sin is referred to, though the term usury is not employed, in the following places:

Ps. 109: 11: "Let the extortioner catch all that he hath." In a literal translation from the Hebrew, these words would read: Let the loan agent (creditor) lay snares for all that he hath. The loan agent is here represented as a layer of snares, because he lends upon usury. And the utterance is a prophetic curse hurled at Judas, the traitor.

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[8]See Footnote No. 6.

[9]See Footnote No. 1. [10]See Footnote No. 1.

Isa. 50: 1: "Which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you?" Thus God says to the children of Zion, who had forsaken Him and whom He had, therefore, rejected and cast away. This their rejection is no fault of His, it is solely and entirely theirs. For where is there any creditor of His, to whom God would sell, or be forced to sell, the children—ah, if they but were such—of Zion, His bride? God has no creditor, He is not indebted to any one. Also in this passage a creditor or money-lender is spoken of in an evil sense.

In the New Testament we meet with the term **usury** in two places.

Mt. 25: 27: "Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury." "Exchangers"[12] were persons who kept a table or bench (bank) of exchange.[13] They made a business of changing money and charged a premium. They also received deposits and paid interest[14] on them. The exchangers used these deposits in their business, or lent them out, charging a higher rate of interest, of course, than they were paying for them. These exchanges were very similar to our present-day banks.

Luk 19: 23: "Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank,[13] that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury."[14]

Both of these texts are parables by which the Lord Jesus would teach us not to leave the gifts that He has given us unused, but to employ them in His service. And when the Lord uses the methods and manners of this world as parables we must not infer from this that He approves of them. Does He approve of what that unjust steward did, whom He also uses as a parable for our learning? Lc. 16: 1-9. In neither of these texts is anything

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[12] Τραπεζίτης. [13] Τράπεζα. [14] Τόκος lit.: birth, then: interest, usury.

affirmed concerning "usury" be it in approval, be it in condemnation, thereof .

Lc. 7: 41-42: "There was a certain creditor[15] which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most." Here the same thing applies that we said about the two foregoing texts: the "creditor" is introduced as a parable, no judgment being passed upon his business.

We have now seen and examined every statement the Bible makes concerning usury. There ought now to be no doubt in our minds that, as we have said, in the Bible usury denotes any increase over the amount or size of the loan, so that the lender requires the loan, be it money or money's worth, to be returned with increase, and thus gnaws at the borrower, worries and oppresses him. And we have seen that whenever the borrower is mentiond in connection with usurious methods that are practised upon him he is invariably represented as **being poor oı in distress,** wherefore he is also referred to as being gnawd at, as being worried and oppressed. We have also seen that the term "increase" likewise designates percentage, payable at regular intervals, interest on the loan, be it money or money's worth. And we have seen that it is invariably wrong and contrary to the Law of God to gnaw at the borrower, to worry and oppress him, by charging him increase and interest. And here it matters not whether the rate of interest be high or low. For if it be high, the poor borrower is being more severely oppressed; if it be low, he is being less severely oppressed; but in either case he is being oppressed. And God will not have him oppressed. We have also seen that the pledge taken from a poor and needy man, as a security, should be restored to him at once. (Neh. 5: 11.)

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[15] Δανειστής: lender, creditor, charger of interest.

5. After all that has now been said, where ought we Christians to stand in this matter of charging interest?

We ought to stand squarely upon the following: When we lend to persons that are poor and needy, be it far from us to charge any interest on such loans; in all cases, however, where poverty and need are not in evidence, we have a right to indemnify ourselves against loss though being deprived of the use and benefit of the money or money's worth that we have loaned, by charging the customary and legal rate of interest. There is no rigid law, which says absolutely and indiscriminately: Thou mayest not, or thou mayest, charge interest; the royal law of love, which by the Spirit of God is revived in us Christians, shall govern us alway and teach us how to conduct ourselves toward our neighbors, as in other matters, so also in this one.

No, there is no commandment of God that says absolutely: **Thou mayest not, or thou mayest, charge interest.** Neither do "the Gentiles, which have not the law," find such a thing "written in their hearts" (Rom. 2: 14-15), nor do we Christians find it in the Bible. Certainly no such law is given, nor even mentioned, in the New Testament. This everybody admits. But neither is there in the Old Testament.

This statement: Neither is there in the Old Testament, is challenged by some. There are those who say: In the Old Testament the charging of interest is absolutely forbidden.

But where? We have quoted every passage in the Old Testament that can justly be said to apply to the charging of interest and have carefully examined each passage, both in the English translation and in the original Hebrew text.

And we do **not** find that in the Old Testament the charging of interest is absolutely forbidden.

Let us briefly survey these passages once more.

First we see the **express utterances of divine Law** for Israel, as recorded by Moses: Exod. 22: 25 and Lev. 25: 25-37.

These passages form, and must form, the basis of a correct understanding of all the rest. All other passages that deal with the charging of interest must be understood in the light of these passages. They surely must.

Now, what do we see in these two passages? In both of these passages we see that **poor and needy brethren in Israel must not be charged any interest on their loans,** that is, they must not be **gnawed at,** must not be **worried and oppressed** by being compelled to pay increase, interest, on any loans. This, precisely this, is forbidden as being "usury."

Then we see the passage Deut. 23: 19-20. This is a portion of the great charge that Moses delivered to the children of Israel, in which he reminded them of all the statutes and judgments that God had given them. In this particular passage he reminded them of the law against usury which we saw in the two passages just referred to. In the present passage Moses did not expressly designate the brethren that came into consideration as poor and needy, as he did in the giving of that law, he merely spoke of "usury," and what was meant by usury was well known in Israel.

Next we notice the passage Neh. 5: 1-13. In this passage we have an object lesson, as it were, showing how the law against usury was understood in Israel. It was understood exactly as it reads, that is, as prohibiting **the oppression of poor and needy brethren by charging them interest on their loans.**

All further passages—Ps. 15: 5 and Prov. 28: 8 and Jer. 15: 10 and Ezek. 18: 8, 9, 13, 17 and 22: 12—are

merely—more so than Deut. 23: 19—brief references to the original law of God against usury, which we find Exod. 22: 25 and Lev. 25: 35-37.

Now, where is the charging of interest absolutely forbidden in the Old Testament? Nowhere.

And in the New Testament it surely is not forbidden.

And even if in the Old Testament the children of Israel had been absolutely prohibited from charging interest—which is not the case—it still would remain to be proved, and that very clearly, that such absolute prohibition is binding upon us Christians in the New Testament. Is that binding upon us which was spoken to Israel Deut. 23: 26? May we, though we may not so treat our brethren, practice usury upon "strangers," upon unbelievers, and upon such as are addicted to a false belief, may we worry and oppress them by charging them interest?

No, there is no rigid law which says absolutely: Thou mayest not, or Thou mayest, charge interest. **The royal law of love, which is revived in us Christians by the Spirit of God, shall govern us alway and shall map out our conduct toward our neighbors also in this matter of charging interest.**

Accordingly the following mind ought to be in us Christians: **As for the poor and needy, be it far from us to charge them any interest whatever.**

When we lend money, or money's worth, to the poor and needy, charity shall quench in us every thought of charging them interest; and if any one became poor and needy after we have lent him money, or money's worth, upon interest, charity, shall impel us to tear the loan contract to pieces and hand him back the pieces. That were a fine specimen of charity, if we were to say to a poor and needy person: Here, I will lend you money, brother; but see that you give me the necessary security plus six per cent of interest! Or if we were to say to a person who had obtained money of us upon furnishing the necessary

security and agreeing to pay six per cent of interest and then had become poor and needy: Remit, brother, remit both capital and interest; here is your signature; if you don't remit we shall go to law against you! That were genuine, downright usury, that were gnawing at the poor borrower, that were worrying and oppressing him in a manner that would cry to God for vengeance.

What does the Lord Jesus say to His disciples? He says: "Lend, hoping for nothing again." Luke 6: 35. When Jesus says: "Lend, hoping for nothing again," he means: Lend without hoping for any recompense, in particular, without hoping for a like favor by the person to whom you are lending. The entire context in which these words occur shows plainly that such is the meaning. (v. 27-36.) At the same time a mere glance at the last words of this context: "Be ye therefore merciful as your Father also is merciful," ought to convince us Christians that the words: "Lend, hoping for nothing again," restrain us also from charging interest, yea, from demanding repayment of the very loan by poor and needy persons.

What does even Moses say to his people Israel through the Spirit of God? He says (Deut. 15: 7-10): "If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother; but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him and shalt surely lend[1] him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth. Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him

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[1] עָבַט to give a pledge, to borrow of some one on furnishing a pledge. (עֲבוֹט: pledge). Hiph.: to lend on receipt of a pledge.

nought; and he cry unto the Lord against Thee, and it be a sin unto thee. Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: Because that for his thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto." Every seventh year was a year of release in Israel. In that year every Israelite was required to release whatsoever his fellow Israelite might have borrowed of him and never to require it of him again. Thus he was also required to give back to him his pledge. (v. 1, 2.) Now, if at the approach of such a year of release an Israelite was appealed to for a loan by his brother Israelite who was poor he must indeed have a generous measure of love not to turn away from him that would borrow of him; for he was in danger of losing all. In a similar way, appealing to our love, the Lord Jesus says: "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." Matth. 5: 42. Thus we see that love shall constrain us to help the poor and needy at all times, also by lending to them, and that even when we cannot see how we are going to recover the loan. How much more shall love constrain us not to charge them interest!

In all cases, however, where no appeal is made to our love by poverty and need, we may indemnify ourselves against loss through being deprived of the use and benefit of the money, or money's worth, that we have loaned, by charging the customary and legal rate of interest.

We Christians and children of God are now living in this present world. God wants us to work for a living, wants us to perform some labor. Now, one form of labor is that of buying and selling, carrying on commerce, mining, manufacturing, etc.—in a word, carrying on, participating in, some form of business conducive to human life and happiness. And for such labor we are entitled to have, and we are supposed to have, nay, we needs must

have, some reward, some profit. Thus we find ourselves confronting the operations of big business, as carried on in this world. Such business is not wrong. It is not forbidden. But it is dangerous. The "world lieth in wickedness." Therefore we ought always to set God before us. We ought to set the Word of God before us, "that no man go beyond nor defraud his brother in any matter; for the Lord is the avenger of all such." 1 Thess. 4: 6.

The business of this world is carried on by means of **money.** This is quite natural. Money is the medium of exchange and commerce, the means of reckoning values. But business is so constructed nowadays that money is no longer a **mere** medium of exchange and commerce and a **mere** means of reckoning values, but, as is justly claimed, and as we have already had occasion to set forth, money is, itself, in our day an article of exchange and commerce, money is a ware, a commodity, an article **having a value in excess of its nominal value.** Some authorities in the Church dispute this statement. They claim: Money can not have any such value, it is contrary to the nature of money to have such a value. How do they support this claim? With the Word of God? No. The Word of God says nothing about this matter. They support this claim with human reasoning. Well and good! We support our claim with the plain facts. Things have taken such a turn that money has become a commodity, has attained a value in excess of its nominal value. Now, what are you going to do about it? We must figure with the facts or we shall fail. The market value of money is represented by the annual percentage, by the **interest it bears.** He who borrows money must pay interest for the time he has the use of it; he who lends money must take interest for the time that others have the use of his money. In the business world this is a thoroughly established custom and a matter of course, which everybody reckons with. What is the market value, the market price, of money. That de-

pends entirely upon the times and circumstances. Sometimes interest is high, sometimes it is lower. But the law fixes a maximum rate, a rate that must not be exceeded, to restrain ruinous usury. Money is the water that turns the wheels of industry and business. Through a thousand channels, large and small, the savings of the people pour into the reservoir of the present-day bank system, where they are made available for business. And here all business is done according to the money value; interest is paid and interest is charged on every hand. Without paying interest and without charging interest you cannot do any business. And things being thus, there is no more wrong in this than there is in the fact that other commodities command their price.

This with regard to big business and to business generally.

Now, just a few words on the charging of interest in private dealings on a smaller scale.

Remember, Christian reader, that all cases in which our charity is appealed to by poverty and need—all such cases are now excluded.

A comes to B and asks for a loan of $10,000 for a term of five years. "What for?" says B. "Oh, I wish to build up a larger trade." "But your trade has reached considerable proportions already and yields a fair profit." "That is so," says A, "but a man will always strive to increase his substance." Let B charge the customary rate of interest without any compunctions.

Nor is it wrong for B to have the interest secured by the customary legal contract. B need not let the rate of interest depend upon the amount of money A is going to make upon the loan. Neither need this consideration guide him in determining whether he shall charge **any** interest. For A does not want B for a partner, neither does he want him to superintend his business. He wants to buy the use of the money with the interest that he pays

for it. It may be that the $10,000 will not yield A the profit that he desires and that he ought to have for the work and interest that he spends upon them. But this possibility does not make the contract unfair. Does the possibility that the renter of a farm may not realize the profit that he desires and that he ought to have for the work and rent he spends upon the farm—does this possibility make it wrong to stipulate by contract so and so much rent shall be paid?

And if some one who, himself. has not the money on hand, comes to B and asks for a loan because he wants to build a larger and more elaborate house, or because he wants to buy an automobile or a grand piano, or anything else that is not absolutely necessary by any means—in such a case B surely does no wrong if he charges the customary and legal rate of interest. It is by no means a duty of love that B, at a loss to himself, helps others to acquire such things as these.

However, in concluding, we feel constrained to add the following: A professional money-lender, who does no work, but lives by putting his money out on interest in larger or smaller quantities, as occasion may require, is a most contemptible creature and we see no reason why he should not be classed with usurers in the Biblical sense of the word.

XXVI. Concerning the Revelation of St. John.

1. Can the Revelation of St. John be understood and shall it be preached and explained to the Churches?

God's reply to this two-fold question is Yes. Many teachers of the Church answer No.

When the Prophet Daniel had received the words of divine prophecy and was now committing them to writing, the angel of God said unto him: "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Dan. 12: 4. With these words God informed the Prophet that his book of prophecies should not be thoroughly and fully understood, and should not be publicly preached and explained, until the latter days, the days of fulfillment. But when St. John, the Apostle, had seen his heavenly visions and received the words of divine prophecy which he was now to commit to writing in his Book of Revelation, the angel of God said to him: "Seal **not** the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand." Ch. 22: 10. By these words God informed the Apostle—**and us**—that the Book of Revelation should be thoroughly and fully understood, and publicly preached and explained, in the near future; for the day of fulfillment was at hand, at hand in the Apostle's day. And many centuries have elapsed since that day! Accordingly John, through the Holy Spirit, writes at the beginning of his book: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." Rev. 1: 3. And

at the end of his book he records that the angel of God said unto him: "Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." Ch. 22: 7. And the angel said this when the voice of Jesus was heard saying: "Behold I come quickly," thus indicating that the day of plain fulfillment, which makes all prophecy plain and clear, was now come; for the day of Christ's coming is the latter end of time, surely. Thus it is certain that God's reply to the question: "Can the Book of Revelation be understood and shall it be preached and explained to the Churches," is very decidedly **Yes.**

But how comes it that many teachers of the Church anwser No?

There are teachers and teachers: many, nay, most, teachers of the Church are unorthodox, few are orthodox.

Let us speak first of the unorthodox teachers.

Most, by far the most, of these deny and reject the verbal inspiration of the Bible, that is, the doctrine taught by the Bible, itself, that it, the Bible, was inspired, word by word, by the Holy Ghost. And now these men are confronted by the Revelation of St. John. There is not a single book in the entire Bible which so clearly and so incessantly and unalterably claims to be verbally inspired by the Holy Ghost as does the Revelation of St. John. This claim is set forth in a manner so striking, so not-to-be-ignored, that if we would be honest we can do but one of two things: Either we must undoubtingly believe that the Revelation of St. John was inspired word by word, by the Holy Ghost, that hence every syllable of this book is unalloyed divine truth, or—we must consider it a volume of impudent lies. A third course there is not for him that would be honest. But the aforementioned unorthodox teachers have no intention of being honest. If they were honest they, from their point of view, would have to say fairly and squarely: We consider the Revelation of St. John the work of a frenzied impostor. But

such a statement they regard as too dangerous. So they beat about the bush and say: 1, We do not know for certain who was the author of this so-called Revelation of St. John; 2, at all events, it is a book that cannot be understood and therefore ought not to be preached and explained to the Churches.

And the view set forth in this latter statement is shared, with more or less limitation, by a considerable number of orthodox Churches.

How do orthodox teachers come to say such a thing?

The first and principal reason why they say such a thing is because they have never given the Book of Revelation their serious attention. And in the light of the utterances quoted above, Rev. 22: 10; 1: 3; 22: 7, this is not commendable.

Another reason is because they are prejudiced—we shall not say **against** the Revelation of St. John, but respecting it. In the entire Bible there is no book from which, besides the Book of Daniel, frenzied enthusiasts have, in all ages, gathered so much poison of false doctrine as they have from the Revelation of St. John. You see, in this book the Apostle gives a description of heavenly **visions** which he saw while "in the Spirit," and which pictured in a prophetic way the future of the Church on earth. And the enthusiasts interpret these vision-pictures according to their own preconceived notions. They do not derive their notions from the visions, but wrest the visions so as to make them square with their notions. They do to the Book of Revelation what heretical people did to the Epistles of St. Paul. But what does St. Peter say of such doings of the heretics and of the Epistles of St. Paul? He says: "In which (Epistles) are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." II Pet. 3: 16. That is: Unlearned and unstable persons do vio-

lence to the Epistles of Paul as they do also to the other Scriptures, and wrest them, distort them, in such fashion as to give color to their own ungodly thoughts and thus make these thoughts acceptable. And this abuse, which is heaped especially upon this Book of Revelation, fills many orthodox teachers of the Church with suspicion and alarm and induces them to ignore the Book of Revelation. But is it right to so ignore it?

Then there is another reason. Such orthodox teachers as have given the Revelation of St. John their attention and have expounded it are by no means agreed in their interpretation of the visions. One interprets them in this fashion, another in that.

And thus it happens that a considerable number of orthodox teachers, when asked if the Revelation of St. John is a book that can be understood and should be preached and explained to the Churches, do finally and really answer No. Their answers run on this order. Ministers should first acquire an understanding of the other books of the Bible and should preach and explain these to the Churches; and they that do this will have enough work to keep them busy. And they say thus: Curiosity invariably reaches for the Book of Daniel and the Revelation of St. John; a sober Christian mind is content to know and understand the other writings of the Bible. Finally they speak thus: The Revelation of St. John cannot be understood correctly until its prophecies are fulfilled; till then its prophetic vision-pictures are bound to be variously interpreted, which is only natural and quite permissible, so long as no false doctrine is derived therefrom.

But all these statements are at variance with Rev. 22: 10 and 1: 3 and 22: 7; they are at variance with the statements of God. And those orthodox teachers who duly considered this fact in a pure and open mind will change

their No into Yes. They will say: Yes, the Revelation of St. John can be understood and explained to the Churches; for its prophecies are fulfilled or are being fulfilled right now.

Well and good. But if one bears all these things in mind: how the Revelation of St. John is so frightfully abused by unorthodox teachers, how it is so largely misunderstood by orthodox teachers—what in the world is the key to a safe and sound interpretation of it? How can we hope to keep from going amiss if we undertake to interpret the Revelation of St. John?

What were the words of St. Paul when, in the presence of Festus, the Roman governor, and of Herod Agrippa, the Jewish king, he answered for himself and his doctrine? He said: "I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come." Acts 26: 22. So the greatest Apostle and preacher of New Testament times had no new doctrine, no new message to proclaim. No, he merely taught and proclaimed the accomplishment of those things which had been foretold in the Old Testament. For this reason the Jews of Berea received his words with all readiness of mind, but they—justly so—searched the Scriptures daily whether those things (that Paul said) were so. Yea, what did the Lord Jesus Christ say that the Holy Ghost, Himself, would do after He (Christ) were gone to the Father? The Holy Ghost, the great God, the Author of all revelation and prophecy and preaching!? He said: "He shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come." John 16: 13. Here the Lord Jesus, in a manner that men can readily understand, represents the Holy Spirit as His messenger (v. 7), who would not speak of Himself, would not bring any new revelation and prophecy and preaching and message, but would, in all matters, whether present

or future, confine Himself to the words that Christ spoke here on earth (Ch. 14: 26).

So then he who would undertake to interpret the Revelation of St. John and would keep from going amiss must know and be assured that there cannot be any new thing therein, any new and strange prophecy, "none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come," and which Christ and the Apostles did say should come. In other words, he that would interpret correctly the heavenly visions and pictures of the Revelation of St. John must constantly search the Scriptures, the Old and the New Testament, whether those things be so as he believes the visions and pictures do signify: In short: **In the Revelation of St. John no prophecy is contained that is not to be found in the writings of the Apostles and Prophets; and these prophecies we are to recognize in the visions of the Revelation of St. John.**

And then he must apply the visions and pictures of this book to the past and present and future of the Church of Jesus Christ. For the Revelation of St. John shows us how the Church of Jesus Christ shall fare here on earth and yonder in eternity. If so we interpret the Revelation of St. John we shall find in it a vast amount of doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness, and comfort, a wealth of God-given comfort, and heaven-born peace.

2. What is contained in the Revelation of St. John?

A divine prophecy foretelling the destinies of the Christian Church on earth. This prophecy reaches from the Apostle's time down to the day of Judgment and the eternal consummation (completion, fulfillment). And this prophecy was set forth in heavenly visions, which were shown the Apostle, and seen by him while he was in the Spirit. However, these visions do not show in succession the destinies of the Church as they succeed one another

in point of time; but each vision, or group of visions, exhibits, with an abundant admixture of comfort, a separate affliction with which the Church shall be afflicted, exhibits it from beginning to end. Thus the vision-prophecies must not be regarded as showing successive events, but rather contemporaneous events, as invariably going back to the beginning and carrying each subject through to the end.

Thus the Apostle begins his Book of Revelation: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw." Rev. 1: 1-2. And a little farther on the Apostle writes thus: "I, John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book." "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter." Verses 9-11, 19. And furthermore the Apostle writes: "After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven, and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the Spirit." Rev. 4: 1-2. And at the end of his book the Apostle writes that the angel, his heavenly guide who had shown him all the heavenly visions, said unto him: "These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done." Rev. 22: 6.

What do we learn from this?

The following:

This Revelation of St. John is a revelation of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, who, though now in His state of exaltation, is still represented as the Servant of God down to the very day of Judgment, to whom is entrusted the government of God's Kingdom, the Church (I Cor. 15: 24-28)—Jesus Christ received this revelation from God. And in revealing it to them, Jesus Christ is to show unto His servants, unto them who believe in Him, **"things which must shortly come to pass,"** things which shall begin at once to happen in His Church on earth, yea, **"the things which are,"** which were already taking place at the time the Revelation was given, and **"things which must be hereafter," "things which must shortly be done."** And this revelation Jesus Christ "signified" by His angel, He had His angel show the revelation by menas of significant signs and visions "in heaven" and had him explain it—to whom? **"Unto His servant John,"** the Apostle, "who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw." I John 1: 1-4. And how did Jesus, through the guidance and mediation of the angel, cause John to see these things and visions in heaven? John was **"in the Spirit,"** he was caught up into heaven. II Cor. 12: 1-4. Thus we learn that the Revelation of St. John contains a divine prophecy foretelling the destinies of the Christian Church on earth, and that this prophecy begins with the time of the Apostle and extends to future time. That this prophecy extends to the day of Judgment and the eternal consummation (completion, fulfillment) may be seen very plainly from the book itself. And likewise the book plainly shows that the vision-prophecies must not be regarded as exhibiting successive events but contemporaneous events, as invariably going back to the beginning and carrying their subject through to the end.

3. Where do we find a plain and reliable statement of the contents of the Revelation of St. John?

In Dr. Martin Luther's preface to the Revelation of St. John.

And basing upon this preface we shall now give a

Synopsis of the Revelation of St. John.

Foreword.

Ch. 1: 1-8.

Contents and authorship.—Blessedness of those who read this book aright. V. 1-3.—The author's greetings to the first readers thereof. V. 4-7.—A word of God's concerning Christ's victory, which shall finally be revealed. V. 8.

Introduction.

Ch. 1: 9; 5: 14.

The vision of the seven candlesticks and stars and the seven messages: Christ, the only Lord and Savior, is in the midst of His Church alway and has the teachers thereof in His hand. They that are faithful to Him are preserved in every temptation and are saved. 1, 9—3, 22.

Re-statement of the contents of the Book of Revelation, as in Ch. 1, 1: Heavenly visions, seen in the Spirit, are to show what shall befall the Church on earth. 4, 1. 2a.

A two-fold vision of consolation is seen by way of preparation for the visions of tribulation that shall follow:

1. God the Father sits enthroned in glory, the glory of His grace, in the midst of His Church on earth (the twenty-four elders), which testifies of Him and gives Him glory through the holy ministry (the four beasts). 4, 2b-11. [That the twenty-four elders represent the Church on earth and the four beasts the ministry, this is shown by Ch. 5: 8-10, where it is stated that they were redeemed by the blood of the Lamb and thus were made unto God kings and priests on the earth. As for the four beasts, compare Ezek. Ch. 1.]

2. **The book in which are written the future destinies of the Church on earth down to its eternal consummation, which is sealed with seven seals to every creature in heaven and on earth**—this book the Savior, Jesus Christ, takes out of the hand of God the Father: The Savior has the destinies of His Church in His powerful hand; He, He alone, governs His Church and leads it toward its eternal consummation. His Church knows this and glorifies Him for it, together with every creature in heaven and on earth. Ch. 5: 1-14.

Christ Opens the Book in which are Written the Destinies of his Church on Earth.

Ch. 6: 1; 22: 5.

Six Seals Are Opened

Ch. 6, 7.

The Church has **temporal** tribulations to endure to the very end of time.

1. At the hands of the civil government, which is ordained of God and shall endure. Ch. 6: 1-2.
2. By wars. v. 3-4.
3. By famine. v. 5-6.

4. By death in every form. v. 7-8.
5. By persecution and martyrdom. v. 9-11.
6. By the terrors of Judgment Day. v. 12-17.

Consolation offered before the opening of the seventh seal: Since **spiritual** tribulations are now about to be revealed, which the Church will have to endure to the end of time, the elect are sealed unto the obtaining of eternal life. Ch. 7.

[The four angels in v. 1 represent spiritual evils: Cut off the refreshing breezes and foul air will gather and breed disease. The tribes of Israel represent the Church of the New Testament. The 144,000 that are sealed represent the elect of any given time. At length it will be seen that a great multitude, which no man can number, has been saved. Thanks be to God!]

The Seventh Seal Is Opened

Ch. 8: 1; 22: 5.

Christ opens the seventh seal. The silence of expectancy. Ch. 8: 1. What is hidden beneath the seventh seal is to be shown and proclaimed by seven angels with **seven trumpets.** v. 2. First, however, a comforting vision is seen: The prayers of the saints, which are acceptable to God through the offering of Jesus Christ apprehended by faith, avail this much, that God's Word shall nevertheless remain and His judgments shall overtake the heretics. v. 3-5. Now the seven angels are ready to sound their trumpets.

Trumpets 1—4

Ch. 8: 7-13.

The Church has **spiritual** tribulations to endure at the hands of **false teachers** to the end of time:

1. By the ruinous hail of legalistic self-righteousness (the righteousness of works of the Law). v. 7.

2. By the mountain-fire of enthusiasm. v. 8-9.
3. By the wormwood of rationalism. v. 10-11.
4. By the darkening influence of arbitrary teaching. v. 12.

[These are the main species of false doctrine.]

And now **three special "woes"** are announced, which shall follow the sounding of trumpets 5—7.

Trumpets 5 and 6: the First and Second Woes

Ch. 9.

Special heresies arising in the Church, **having world-power.**

1. Trumpet 5 and the first woe: **Aranism.** This "woe" lasts "five months": an appointed time. v. 1-11. Announcement that one woe is past; but that two more woes are coming. v. 12.

2. Trumpet 6 and the second woe: **Mohammedanism.** On the Euphrates (v. 14). Suddenness of appearance (v. 15). Punishment of apostate Christians of the Orient (20-21). v. 13-21. The second woe coincides in point of time with the third. [Comp. Ch. 11: 14.] Hence there is now given in conncetion with the second woe a

Preparatory Disclosure of the Real Character of the Third Woe

Ch. 10: 1; 11: 13.

Another mighty angel (comp. Ch. 5: 2) represents the heresy which, Christ-like in appearance, will deprave the Church to the uttermost "forty and two months." Ch. 10: 1; 11: 2.

[Nearly all expositors of the seventeenth century and down to the present day reject Luther's interpretation of the tenth chapter and hold that this "other mighty angel" is Christ. And, indeed, he is Christ-like in appearance v. 1). But while Christ may be designated "a mighty

angel," the designation "another mighty angel" cannot refer to Him. This "I saw another mighty angel" carries us back to Ch. 5: 2, where, there can be no doubt, a created angel is meant. Therefore also in our present chapter a created angel must be meant. In the visions of Revelation the angels perform this two-fold service: they represent good and evil (Ch. 7: 1) and announce the coming of both (the seven angels with the seven trumpets). This angel is Christ-like in his bearing (v. 1), he claims dominion over all the world (v. 2b, 5a) and to the end of time (v. 5b-7); but he holds in his hand a little book (2a) and the contents of this book are, in the mouth, sweet as honey but in the belly they are bitter (10). Thus the angel represents the most accursed of all heretics, who, Christ-like in appearance and clothed with great power and arrogance, does, through his erring doctrine, which is pleasant to the flesh but ruinous to the soul, deceive the Christian Church, mislead and deprave it, so thoroughly deprave it that well-nigh the whole of Christendom becomes heathenish in the very vitals (Ch. 11: 1-2). And this is to be testified to the whole deluded world (Ch. 10: 11). The number forty-two months, or 1,260 days, or three and one-half years, is the ever-recurring number, serving always to indicate the third woe. In typical fashion it denotes the duration of this woe, which, let us state in advance, shall be from the beginning thereof to the very day of Judgment.]

In this period ("1,260 days") there will always be some ("two") true and faithful witnesses sent from God, who shall expose the fraud and preach the saving truth. They sall be persecuted and killed, but not exterminated. And God punishes those that despise them and their testimony. Ch. 11: 3-13.

And now is to follow the description proper of the third woe, in which the heresy, characterized in the above, allies itself with the world-power. v. 14.

Trumpet 7: the Third Woe

Ch. 11: 15; 19: 21.

The seventh angel sounds. Ch. 11: 15a.

1. Three Heavenly Visions of Comfort First

Ch. 11: 15b; 12: 17.

1. The faithful are not ignorant of Christ's final victory over their oppressors even in this most dreadful woe and give glory to God therefor. The judgment of a merciful and faithful God are executed upon the spoilers of the Church. Ch. 11: 15b-19.

2. The one holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the entire true Christian Church on earth ("the woman") travails in birth, is pained to be delivered of spiritual children (Ps. 45: 17; Gal. 4: 26; 27: 19; I Cor. 4: 15). The diabolical third woe rises up against her and would devour her offspring as soon as they are born. The Church gives birth [Christ, the head, is mentioned instead of His members, the believers (Eph. 4: 15-16; I Cor. 12-27), who invariably are spiritually born and in whom He is constantly being formed (Gal. 4: 19), who abide in Him and He in them (John 15:5)]. And the Church flees and is preserved of God, albeit in a miserable and lowly state ("wilderness"), throughout the period of the third woe ("1,260 days").. Ch. 12: 1-6.

3. Christ and His Church on earth fight, spiritually, against the powers of hell that rise up in the third woe. The latter do not prevail, but they lose their deceptive, Christ-like appearance (Ch. 10) and their spiritual power over the souls of men and merely retain earthly power. Whereat there is great rejoicing in the Church of God. But still, woe unto the Church, which walks on earth! For the powers of hell will persecute her, having great wrath, knowing that they have but a short time and then

the judgments of God will overtake them. But God stands by His Church and in spite of the continued wrath and persecution and warfare of the powers of hell she flees and is preserved throughout the entire period of the third woe (three and one-half year="a time and times and half a time,") though it be in a miserable and lowly state ("wilderness"). v. 7-17.

[This third vision is substantially the same as the second, as v. 13-14 reveal. This war was seen "in heaven"; however, it is not waged in heaven, it is waged on earth. John saw the vision in heaven. It is altogether wrong and wide of the mark to conceive, here, of a battle fought in heavenly regions between Christ ("Michael") and His angels, on the one hand, and Satan and his angels on the other. Does the Bible tell of any such thing? Does the tenth chapter of Daniel? It does not. Why, this opinion reminds one of the fable that tells of the battle of the Olympic gods, one part of whom fought on the side of the Greeks and the other on the side of the Trojans!]

II. The Devil Gives the Archheretic the Greatest (Worldly) Power and Authority

Ch. 13.

1. Out of the sea of nations there rises up "the fourth" great "kingdom," or **world-power,** that of the **Romans.** [See Daniel 7: 1-7. (Comp. 2: 31-33, 37-43).] It is hostile to God and Christ and the devil gives it the greatest power and authority. v. 1-2.

2. While under one form of government ("one of his heads," comp. Ch. 17: 9-10), the Roman world-power expires; however, to the astonishment of all the world, it is revived. v. 3.

3. To this revived Roman world-power the devil restores the greatest power and authority, so that all the world bows to the devil and to the kingdom in servility

and adoration. **And this kingdom of the devil brings upon the Church the third woe** ("power was given unto him to continue forty and two months": the number typical of the third woe): it haughtily blasphemes God and His Word and His Church and them that dwell in heaven; it makes war with the saints of God and overcomes them; it has power over all kindreds and nations; all the non-elect worship it. Oh, remember this! But God's judgments will be poured out upon this cruel, murderous kingdom. Here the faith of the saints shall assert itself in patience. v. 4-10.

[But where does history show us any such revival of the Roman world-power? Students of secular history, and others, laugh and scoff at the Revelation of St. John and at our interpretation. The following vision explains all.]

4. Another kingdom ("beast") rises up out of the world ("earth"); **this has the appearance of the Church of Christ and teaches the doctrine of the devil** ("had two horns like a lamb and spake as a dragon"). [Think of the angel that was Christ-like in appearance and had the book in his hand, Ch. 10!] **This is the revived Roman world-power, which brings upon the Church the third woe.**

This has and exercises all the power of the devil just ascribed to the revived Roman world-power; this causes all that dwell on earth to worship it, as just shown, and thus to worship the Roman world-power, which is revived in it; this also does great lying wonders and signs and thus deceives all men that are not elect and causes them to bow down in servility and adoration before this kingdom; this causes men to make of it a genuine image of the ancient Roman world-power, not a dead image but one having life, life causing as many as will not worship it to be killed; this exercises such power that no one, small or great, rich or poor, free or bond, may buy or sell, may exist, who will not openly cast his lot with it. v. 11-18.

[Verily, this is no puzzle! This kingdom we see. We see it in the history of the past, both sacred and secular history, and we see it in the present. It is so plain a child can see it. It it is **the kingdom of the Pope of Rome, the kingdom of Antichrist.** This it is that brings upon the Church the third woe. **What shall become of the Church of Jesus Christ under such conditions?]**

III. The Church of Jesus Christ Is Delivered, the Kingdom of Antichrist Is Crushed

Ch. 14.

1. Even in the fulness of power of the kingdom of Antichrist the remnant of 144,000 according to the election of grace (Ch. 7: 4) are not wanting, who, though hidden from the sight of men, are known to God and are very lovely in His sight. v. 1-5.

[By what means did God reserve these unto Himself? Here we may think of the cross, which was constantly before their eyes; of the Gospel, which they heard, however sparingly, and of the name of Jesus Christ; of the little children brought to their Savior in Baptism (Ps. 8: 2); of the refuge sought with Christ alone in the hour of death. Owing to the very fact that these are found in the very midst of popish darkness they are painted in such bright colors.]

2. The time is coming when the everlasting Gospel will be preached **freely and openly** and will reach the 144,00, who will freely confess it. v. 6-7.

[This is the **Reformation** achieved through Martin Luther.]

3. By such preaching of the Gospel the **spiritual** fall of the kingdom of Antichrist is brought about. v. 8.

[The eyes of the elect are opened and they are led to see and understand that God's Word alone has authority in the Church; that they are justified in the sight of God,

and saved, by grace, for Jesus' sake, through faith alone; that the pope is the false prophet and Antichrist.]

4. Whosoever, after all this, still remains, in reality and truth, in the kingdom of Antichrist will be damned (v. 9-11). The watchword of the saved (v. 12). Consolation even in martyrdom and death (v. 13). v. 9-13.

5. The aforesaid spiritual fall of the kingdom of Antichrist is followed by the final Judgment (v. 14). The faithful cry for judgment (v. 15). The faithful are reaped and gathered in (v. 16), the adherents of Antichrist are publicly cut off the vine of the Church and cast into the wine-press of the wrath of God (v. 17-20). v. 14-20.

[Now read II Thess. 2 and compare it with what the seven trumpet has thus far announced.]

IV. The Seven Last Plagues Are Poured Out Upon the Kingdom of Antichrist

Ch. 15: 1; 16: 21.

[Here a more detailed account is given of what is stated Ch. 14: 9-13, and this account is followed up by a vision of the last Judgment, just as Ch. 14 ends with such a vision.]

Now [after the Reformation] God, in His wrath, causes seven plagues to be poured out upon the kingdom of Antichrist. Plagues are all this kingdom may expect down to the final Judgment: "the **last** plagues." Such turning of the tide is great and marvelous. Ch. 15: 1.

Hence the redeemed take new courage, the courage born of new spiritual life ("a sea of glass mingled with fire"), and sing Moses' song of triumph, and, moreover, the Lamb's. v. 2-4. Out of the true and orthodox Church ("temple of the tabernacle of the testimony") the witnesses and soldiers who witness and war against Antichrist ("the seven angels") come forth in robes of victory and glory ("clothed in pure and white linen and having their breasts

girded with golden girdles"), proclaiming the Gospel ("one of the four beasts"), in order to plague the spiritually fallen kingdom of Antichrist. And the glory of God is with them. v. 5-8.

And now the seven plagues are poured out upon the kingdom of Antichrist. Ch. 16: 1. The first ones are **spiritual** plagues resulting from the preaching of the Gospel. [II Cor. 2: 14-16]:

1. Spirit of bitterness and of hatred against the Gospel. v. 2.

2. Increasing abomination of error, lying, and spiritual death. v. 3.

3. They die in despair from spiritual thirst, since the water of life is become blood to them through the just judgment of God. v. 4-7.

4. The Gospel scorches them and makes them blasphemous; repent, they will not. [John 16: 8-11.] v. 8-9.

Earthly plagues are added, due to the preaching of the Gospel:

5. World-wide authority and esteem diminished, which leads to madness and hardening of the heart. v. 10-11.

6. Power dries up, princes and nations gain freedom and inflict injury (v. 12). Spirits of recuperation and counter-reformation go out to princes and nations. True, they are croaking frogs, but they are of the devil (v. 13-14). Words of warning by Christ to the orthodox (v. 15). Armageddon! It is a lost battle. Never again will the kingdom of Antichrist regain its former world-wide authority and esteem (v. 16). v. 12-16.

7. The last plague to be poured out upon the kingdom of Antichrist is the final judgment. v. 17-21.

V. New Beginning

By way of summing up Ch. 13—16 and especially of shedding light upon Ch. 16, the Revelation estab-

lishes the guilt of the kingdom of Antichrist, plainly characterizes this kingdom and passes judgment upon it, and declares or shows such judgment.

Ch. 17: 1; 19: 21.

1. The Guilt.

Ch. 17: 1; 15.

The kingdom of Antichrist is the great spiritual harlot for all nations. Its guilt is to be established and judgment to be passed upon it and declared. v. 1-2.

The angel (v. 1) carries John away in the Spirit into the wilderness. [Where Antichrist reigns, there is a spiritual wilderness.] v. 3a.

The kingdom of Antichrist ["the woman," in contrast with that "woman" (Ch. 12: 1) which is the Church of Jesus Christ and which the church of Antichrist professes to be] has for its seat the old Roman world-power ["the beast," Ch. 13: 1 and Dan. 7: 7] which, indeed, had expired, but which the devil had resurrected in said kingdom of Antichrist. v. 3b.

The kingdom of Antichrist shines in great pomp. v. 4a.

But in this pomp it offers the filth of spiritual fornication: of false, at bottom, heathenish and idolatrous, doctrine. v. 4b.

Thus there is written upon the forehead of the kingdom and church of Antichrist a name: **"Mystery** (II Thess. 2: 7), **Babylon the Great** (which confounds the Church of Christ and holds it captive), **the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Eearth."** v. 5.

The kingdom of Antichrist is drunken with the blood of the saints and of the martyrs (witnesses), which it has shed. v. 6a.

John wonders with great admiration (wonderment) at seeing this "woman" sit upon the "beast." v. 6b.

The angel explains the mystery of the "woman" and of the "beast" that carries her and that has seven heads and ten horns. v. 7.

The angel offers John this explanation: The 'beast" was [as the Roman world-power, for a long time], and is not [the Roman world-power will expire], and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit [will be resurrected as the kingdom of Antichrist by the power of hell] and shall go into perdition. And all they that dwell on the earth, that are not elect, shall wonder when they see that this kingdom was and that it expired and yet is. [They will wonder in such fashion as to worship this kingdom and become subject to it as unto the Church of Jesus Christ. Ch. 13: 4, 8, 12, 16]. And now wise reflection is needful [and intelligent and careful searching of history]: The seven heads of the beasts are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. [The kingdom of Antichrist has for its permanent capital and place of residence the city of **Rome,** which is built upon seven hills or mountains.] The seven heads also point to seven "kings," seven distinct forms of government of the Roman world-power, resurrected in the kingdom of Antichrist. In St. John's day five of these were fallen [the kingship, the consulate, the dictatorship, the decemvirate, the government by military tribunes], one then was [the imperial form of government], one was not yet come and when it were come it must continue a short space [the division of the empire (395 A. D.) and the days when Germanic tribes subjugated the Western Roman Empire and thus utterly put an end to the Roman world-power (A. D. 476)].

And that which now follows is the kingdom in which the Roman world-power that was and that expired is resurrected so that it is the eighth form of government and is of the seven: **the kingdom of Antichrist;** and that finally goeth into perdition. And the ten horns signify ten provinces of the Roman world-power, which in John's

day were not yet become independent kingdoms, but which when they **are** become independent kingdoms, will nevertheless surrender to the kingdom of Antichrist and will hand in hand therewith, make war with Christ and His Church and will finally be overcome. And "the many waters" upon which the great harlot sits (v. 1) are the peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues over which the kingdom and church of Antichrist has power. v. 8-15.

[He that does not see the Roman **papacy** pointed out plainly in this chapter is more than blind, he **will** not see.]

[Up to this point the kingdom of Antichrist, the Roman papacy, is the universally acknowledged world-power.]

2. The Judgment

Ch. 17: 16; 19: 21.

[But here the tide is turned.]

The angel concludes his explanation with the announcement that the time will come when the kingdom of Antichrist will be hated and plundered by its own vassals (the ten horns or kingdoms that gave their power unto the beast): God will put into their hearts to fulfill his will and judgments, although, spiritually, they remain under the sovereignty of Antichrist. Ch. 17: 16-18.

[This is the beginning of the execution of God's judgment upon the kingdom of Antichrist, which, however, is still very far from being harmless.]

Then follows the Reformation and the spiritual fall of the kingdom of Antichrist (as in Ch. 14: 6-8). Ch. 18: 1-3. Hereupon God's people are told to come out of the kingdom of Antichrist, which is appointed to destruction (as in Ch. 14: 9-13). v. 4-5.

Yea, they are told to storm the iniquitous city by the preaching of the Gospel (as in Ch. 15: 5; 16: 16). v. 6-8.

They who possess influence and riches in the kingdom

of Antichrist bewail the judgment come "in one hour" (Reformation), which injures their business.

[Note the "souls of men" mentioned among the articles of merchandise. v. 13]. v. 9-19.

Rejoicing in heaven. v. 20.

This fall of the kingdom of Antichrist is irreparable, leads to the everlasting judgment, and is well deserved. (v. 21-24.)

[In this passage some expressions occur which seem to indicate that the final judgment is spoken of in this place, for example, in v. 22, 23. But the real meaning of these expressions is that the fall of the kingdom of Antichrist is irreparable and this preliminary judgment will lead up to, and end in, the eternal judgment. See Ch. 19: 11-21.]

Song of triumph sung by the true Church of Jesus Christ because of this judgment of God executed upon the kingdom of Antichrist. Ch. 19: 1-8.

An incident: John and the angel. (v. 9, 10).

Christ, with His Church, now proceeds to the final struggle, which is spiritual, with the Church of Antichrist. The victory is a foregone conclusion. Although the kingdom of Antichrist also lines up its legions to battle. The end is such that the kingdom of Antichrist, with its head and father, the false prophet (Ch. 10) is, on the last day, cast into perdition. (v. 11-21.)

Here the announcement of trumpet 7 concerning the third woe is ended.

New and Separate Vision:
Of Satan Bound and Loosed and of the Final Judgment
First Appendix to the Seventh Seal
Ch. 20.

[The events foretold in this vision are not to follow, in point of time, the things thus far recorded in this pro-

phetic record of the fortunes of the Church of Jesus Christ, they are to run parallel with them, go hand in hand with them, as it were: **"A thousand years" designates typically the greatest length of time the Church of Jesus Christ is to walk upon earth.]**

Two things are prophesied that are to transpire during "a thousand years":

1. **Satan shall be restrained from further deceiving, or from also[1] deceiving, the nations during the space of "a thousand years."** v. 1-3.

[We ask: What is the meaning of: "that Satan should deceive the nations no more"? The common answer, which is given also by orthodox commentators, is: Satan is restrained from hindering the conversion of the Gentiles during this space of "a thousand years," missionary work among the heathen nations shall be carried on without molestation. But this is a misconception, a conception which the text itself repudiates. For v. 8-9 state plainly what Satan's object is in deceiving the nations, what he will mislead them to when he is no longer restrained from doing that which he has all along purposed to do: Satan will "go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went upon the breath of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city." **This,** then, is the thing unto which Satan

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[1]The particle ἔτι, which is used in the Greek text, v. 3, and is not translated in the German Bible—though it is in the English—means, according to New Testament usage: **still longer;** then: **also, in addition.** See Wahl's **Clavis.**

may no more, or, may not also,[2] mislead the nations for a space of "a thousand years": **to draw their forces together in a universal onslaught upon the Church of Jesus Christ.** Surely, the Church is already enduring afflictions enough, both in body and soul, especially by reason of the third woe. This is the only conception of the binding and shutting up of Satan that is warranted by the vision. In other respects Satan is active enough on earth during the "thousand years." The history of the Church shows us Satan bound, plainly enough; and the "thousand years" began when the persecutions of the Christians by the Roman world-power ceased.

2. **During this space of "a thousand years" there live and reign with Christ the souls of the faithful confessors of Jesus and of His Word who suffered martyrdom and death at the time of the Roman world-power and then also within this self-same space of "a thousand years," at the hands of Antichrist. This is "the first resurrection."** v. 4-6.

[The question naturally arises: What does Satan's bondage during the space of "a thousand years" profit the multitude of those who, prior to that time, and, moreover, during that time, suffered martyrdom and death? The answer is given above. And this answer contains nothing new, it contains merely what the Scriptures say in other places; for example, in Acts 7: 58 and in II Cor. 5: 8 and Phil. 1: 23 and II Tim. 4: 6-8, also in the Book of Revela-

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[2]Either meaning of ἔτι will do. Taken in the former sense, it would indicate that the persecutions of the Christians, which were general in the early days, should cease for a space of "a thousand years." In the latter sense, it would indicate that to all the other tribulations of which this book foretells there should no be added, for a space of "a thousand years" a universal onslaught upon the Church of Jesus Christ at the hands of the wicked world.

tion itself (Ch. 7: 9 and Ch. 14: 13). Only the designation used here is new and unique, to-wit: "the first resurrection." We believe this designation can be best explained as follows: The first, or the beginning, of the resurrection. For the living and reigning of these souls with Christ is not to come to an end but rather to continue eternally in the resurrection. The statement in v. 5a: "The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished," means: They remained in their state of death also during this space of "a thousand years" and will so remain eternally.[3] The "second death," which has no power over the faithful martyrs (v. 6; comp. Ch. 2: 10), nor over all them that consider the end of their conversation and follow their faith (Hebr. 13: 7), this death has power over them. The Apostle here speaks of the unbelievers and minions of Antichrist and of their damnation.]

After the "thousand years" are expired Satan is permitted to deceive the unbelievers and lead them in a universal onslaught, such as has never been, upon the Church of Jesus Christ. v. 7-9a.

[We are living in this period. The "thousand years" are expired. Satan has been loosed. The unbelieving world ("Gog and Magog," v. 8; comp. Ezek. 38 and 39), blinded and goaded on by Satan, is assaulting the Church of Jesus Christ with all the weapons that hell can provide. In the **Orient** this prophecy has been most clearly fulfilled ever since the Turks, in 1453, conquered Constantinople and began their oppression, still continued, of the Christian Church, which then was, and is to this day, horribly corrupted with false doctrine. In the **Occident** (western world) Satan has arrayed his legions of legions against the Church of Jesus Christ—where and how? By letter and word and deed, in colleges and schools, in so-

[3]See Wahl's Clavis ad ζάω 1 c.

called Christian pulpits, in cities and rural districts, among the high and the low, among the educated and the uneducated, among the old and the young—everywhere does enmity against Christ and His Word manifest itself, so that the Church of Jesus Christ appears well-night overwhelmed. And again in the Orient a similar state of affairs is seen. 'Tis a mistake to seek the onslaught upon the Church of Jesus Christ, as instituted by Satan and as here foretold—to seek this onslaught only where brute force is resorted to. This method of warfare merely serves as a symbol in the vision which John beheld. No, indeed. Satan has learned a thing or two. He employs more subtle craftiness now. His favorite policy is, by intellectual means, to snuff out the faith of the Christians and thus destroy the Church.]

But God will put an end to this thing also, even as He will to Antichrist and his kingdom, when He comes in final judgment. v. 9b-15.

The Last Vision:

Of the Eternal Consummation of the Church of Jesus Christ

Second Appendix to the Seventh Seal

Ch. 21: 1; 22: 5.

A new heaven and a new earth. (Isa. 65; 17; 66: 22; II Pet. 3: 3-13). Ch. 21: 1.

The Church of Jesus Christ coming down [from the judgment] in glory unto glory. v. 2-5a.

God the Father invites and warns all that read. v. 5b-8. The glory of the Church of Jesus Christ in the life everlasting likened to that of a city of incomparable glory. v. 9. Ch. 22: 5.

Closing Words

Ch. 22: 6; 21.

1. The heavenly messenger and guide to all visions (Ch. 1: 1) assures the Apostle of the truth and divinity of the visions of the things which must shortly be done. v. 6.

[We see here the harmonious plan underlying all the visions described in the Revelation of St. John. Likewise, Ch. 21: 5 points to Ch. 4: 2ff and to Ch. 5: 1; v. 9a to Ch. 15: 1, 6,7; v. 9b to Ch. 12: 1, 6, 13-17 and Ch. 19: 7. From these and similar indications we infer that the Apostle beheld all the visions in a single hour.]

2. Jesus gives assurance that He is coming soon. v. 7a.

3. Thereupon the angel resumes speaking and calls him blessed that keeps the prophecies of Revelation. v. 7b.

4. John signs his name to this book. Tells how he was about to worship the angel, but was prevented, and that the angel said the sayings of the prophecies of this book should not be sealed, for the time of fulfillment was at hand. v. 8-10.

5. Jesus speaks and bids every one ponder well what he would do, that He is coming quickly unto judgment. v. 11-13.

6. Again the angel's voice is heard blessing the godly and warning the wicked. v. 14-15.

7. Jesus says that He, the Savior, gave this revelation for the benefit of the Churches by His angel. v. 16.

8. John says by the Holy Spirit that the Church, endued with the Spirit of God, shall ever more extend an invitation to come and partake of God's pure, free grace. And he bids all men take heed lest they change or slight the Book of Revelation. v. 17-19.

9. Jesus, who gave the Revelation, says again that He is coming quickly. v. 20a.

10. John calls for such coming of Jesus and concludes with greetings of grace unto all. Amen. v. 20b-21.

XXVI. Millennialism.

Can the teachings of millennialism be tersely and strikingly refuted in language that everybody can understand? Or does this require lengthy and learned explanations which ordinary Christians are not able to grasp?

It does not. Millennialism is spun out of the twentieth chapter of Revelation. And this very chapter, as, indeed, the entire Revelation of St. John and the entire Bible, clearly refutees the false doctrine of millennialism.

However, before showing how easily millennialism can be refuted, we must first show what millenialism is.

1. What is Millennialism?

Millennialism is a word derived from the Latin language. It designates the doctrine of the **millennium.**

This doctrine tells of a thousand years of **glory** and **dominion,** which the Church of Jesus Christ shall at some future time enjoy **upon earth.**

How shall this thing be? In answering this question we shall lead you step by step.

1. The millennium is to begin immediately after Anti-Christ and his kingdom have been destroyed.

2. Antichrist is to be a temporal ruler, clearly, and a great and fierce enemy of God. He has not appeared as yet, but when he does appear he will have a world-wide temporal kingdom for three and one-half years and will rave with great cruelty against the Church of Jesus Christ.

3. When the three and a half years are expired Christ will visibly descend from heaven, and with Him His hea-

venly hosts, and will fight against Antichrist and will utterly destroy him and his kingdom. This is called **the first coming** (return) **of Christ.**" All this is spun out of Rev. 19: 11-21.

4. Then Satan shall be shut up in hell for a thousand years, so that he can no more deceive the nations of the earth and will no longer have any power. This is spun out of Rev. 20: 1-3.

5. **Then the millennium will come.** And how will that be? Thus:

A. The Apostles will be risen from the dead and will sit upon twelve thrones and be judges. This is spun out of Rev. 20: 4a in connection with Mt. 19: 28 and Dan. Ch. 7.

B. And the Christian martyrs will rise from the dead and will live and reign with Christ on earth a thousand years. This is called **"the first resurrection."** The rest of the dead will not live again until the thousand years are finished. This is spun out of Rev. 20: 4b-6.

C. All Jews then living will be converted and will be the leading people in the kingdom. Jerusalem, with its temple, will be the center of the kingdom. (Some millennialists say—and this is really more consistent—that all the Jews that ever lived will rise converted.) This is spun out of Rom. 11: 2-32 and out of misinterpreted sayings of the Prophets.

D. An exceedingly great force of Gentiles will be converted.

E. The Church of Jesus Christ will have such complete dominion and excellent glory on earth as cannot now be imagined. (Touching this point, some millennialists indulge in the wildest dreams, which, however, we could not now relate without going beyond the space allotted us in this book.) This is spun out of sayings of the Prophets which treat partly of the spiritual blessedness of the true Church, partly of the latter's eternal consummation.

F. All unconverted heathen or false Christians will have to bow to the dominion and glory of the Christian Church.

6. But when the thousand years are expired Satan will be loosed and will deceive these unconverted heathen and false Christians, gathering them into an army that cannot be numbered and marching them against the Christian church and especially against Jerusalem. What a frightful turn of affairs! And how dreadful that even the Apostles and the risen martyrs must again experience such things! This is spun out of Rev. 20: 7-9a.

7. But at this juncture the last day will suddenly dawn, with the so-called **second coming of Christ,** with the final Judgment, with the fire that will consume these hostile forces, with the general resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the wicked, and with the execution of judgment upon the latter. This is spun out of Rev. 20: 9b-15.

While millennialists, it is true, adduce other passages of Scripture to fortify their false doctrine, this doctrine, nevertheless, must stand and fall with the interpretation of the twentieth chapter of Revelation. Let this chapter be interpreted simply and in a manner that does justice to the text and millennialism will burst like a bubble.

II.

How Can the Teachings of Millennialism Be Refuted?

In answering this question we shall follow up the teachings of millennialism in every point. So give your attention now to point 1, as stated above, and so on throughout the list.

1. That the Church should have dominion and glory on earth for a thousand years after Antichrist and his kingdom have been destroyed—this is not possible. For Antichrist and his kingdom are to be destroyed, not be-

fore, but on, the **day of Judgment, the end of all things.** Rev. 14: 14-20; 16: 17-21; 19: 20-21; II Thess. 2: 8. (See point 3.)

2. Antichrist has already appeared and he is not an enemy of God that is manifestly of this world, he is the false prophet who has come, Christ-like in appearance, and has sat down in the Church of God "as God," "showing himself that he is God," who gathers into his real and proper kingdom the non-elect "Christians"; aye, in whose kingdom, by the power and working of Satan, the ancient, God-hating Roman world-power has been revived; who for centuries has raved most cruelly against the true confessors and disciples of Jesus; who still is the very worst enemy of the Church of Jesus Christ and will be, till doomsday; although, by the Reformation, God's judgments have come upon him and will destroy him until the final judgment on the last day destroys him and his kingdom utterly. His time and that of his kingdom is plainly referred to throughout the Book of Revelation by means of the typical number "1,260 days," or "forty and two months," or "a time and times and half a time." **The Antichrist is the pope of Rome.** Rev. 10-19; II Thess. 2: 1-11.

3. There will be no "first" and "second" coming (returning) of Christ. There will be but one return. It will take place on Judgment day, at the end of the world. This is what the Bible uniformly teaches from cover to cover. To speak of a two-fold returning of Christ is to perpetrate a shameful fraud. Wherefore the prophecy which is recorded Rev. 14: 14-20 and 16: 17-21 and 19: 20-21 and II Thess. 2: 8,and which deals with the final Judgment unto which Christ shall return visibly and terribly to destroy Antichrist and his kingdom—this prophecy must be understood as referring to the last day. (See point 1.)

4. The shutting up of Satan for a space of a thousand

years, which is symbolically represented in Rev. 20: 1-3, by no means signifies that Satan shall not be permitted to walk about on earth and that he, therefore, cannot, in any way, deceive the nations during that time, and that he shall simply be shorn of his power. It merely signifies that during that time Satan cannot so deceive the nations **as to gather them together to battle as the sands of the sea and cause them to "compass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city," the true Church of Jesus Christ, and make war upon it in all the earth.** This is stated expressly in this very chapter. v. 7-9a.

5. And now we shall examine the description of the millennium step by step in the light of God's Word.

A. That the Apostles shall then be risen from the dead, shall sit upon twelve thrones and exercise judgment—there is not a word to that effect in either place, Rev. 20: 4a or Dan. Ch. 7. Mt. 19: 28 it does say, however, that this shall be done "in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory"; it shall be done in the resurrection and re-creation on **the last day** when God will make all things new.

B. That the martyrs shall then **rise from the dead** and shall live and reign with Christ **on earth** for a space of a thousand years—there is not a word to that effect Rev. 20: 4b-6. The Apostle speaks here of the **"souls"** of the martyrs and says that during the "thousand years" during which Satan shall not be permitted to stir up the nations so mightily and lead them against the Church of Jesus Christ, these souls shall have part in the glory of Christ, even as the Scriptures declare in other places. That this is called "the first resurrection" and is called a blessed thing—this signifies, as may be seen from the words: "on such the second death hath no power," that this glorious state of these souls shall never come to an end but rather shall be made perfect by the resurrection in the last day. "The rest of the dead" are the enemies

of Christ that have died. Of them it is said that they lived not again until the "thousand years" were finished. Then, on Judgment day, they will rise, but only to pass into "the second death," as v. 14-15 and other passages of Scripture abundantly declare.

C. That when the millennium begins all Jews will be converted and will be the leading people in this kingdom—there is not a word to this effect Rom. 11: 25-32. What it does say there is that when "the fulness of the Gentiles is come in," that is, on the last day, it will be seen that all the **elect** Jews—all Israel, as touching the election (v. 28; comp. v. 7b)—have, by the grace of God, come out of their former unbelief and obtained salvation, just as the elect Gentiles have done. And this we are now to believe as a "mystery" which God has revealed to us, although we cannot see it. That Jerusalem with its temple shall be the center of the millennial kingdom is a piece of fiction derived from misunderstood, misinterpreted sayings of the Prophets, in which Jerusalem and its temple are made to typify the Church of Jesus Christ and its spiritual estate.

D. That in the millennium a great and mighty host of heathen shall be converted—where is that written? The Lord Jesus says: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations"; but He does not say that all nations nor that great multitudes, even, will be converted. "And then shall the end come," says He. Mt. 24: 14. And He says on the contrary that because, before the end, "iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." v. 12.

E. That in the millennium the Church shall have such perfect dominion and glory on earth for a space of a thousand years, this is in open conflict with all the prophecies of the Revelation itself. Everywhere the Church of Jesus Christ on earth is represened as a kingdom of **tribulation** to the very end of time. Let us recall its prophecies

dealing wiht this point. The series of **bodily** afflictions to which the Church is subject and which are enumerated Ch. 6 leads up to the very terrors of Judgment day. The multitudes of God's elect made perfect are such as "came out of great tribulation." Ch. 7: 14. And the **spiritual** tribulations and the special "woes" to which the Church is subject, and above all the third woe, which is the woe of Antichrist, and during which the Church is preserved of God "in the wilderness" of wretchedness and humiliation (Ch. 12: 6-14), these shall only cease, as we have already seen,[1] on the last day and at the end of the world. In the prophecies of Revelation there is no room for an age of temporal glory for the Church; throughout its earthly career the Church of Jesus Christ is cross-bound. And this is the uniform doctrine of the Bible. Mt. 16: 24; Acts 14; 22; II Tim. 3: 12; Rom. 8: 17-25.

F. That all unconverted heathen and false Christians will bow to the dominion and glory of the Church is likewise contrary to the Scriptures. Luke 12: 32 will always apply and it points beyond this world and time. And in the history of the Church we find no trace of such a thing, unless we have in mind that dominion of the Church which was ushered in by the conversion of the Roman emperor, Constantine the Great. But that dominion was a flimsy and wretched thing. True, the persecutions ceased and it was no longer a disgrace, it was an honor now, to be a Christian. But that did not prove a real blessing to the Church; for the Church now rapidly became worldly-minded. About this time the era began in which Satan was restrained from so deceiving the nations as to gather them to battle as the sand of the sea and to cause them to compass the true Church of Jesus Christ about and war against it in all the earth. (See 4.) And this era the Church should have used for its spiritual edification, but this it did not do.

[1]See point 3.

Thus all the imaginary glory of a millennium vanished away when viewed in the light of Revelation itself and of the Scriptures in general.

6. That after a thousand years are expired Satan shall be loosed, shall deceive the unconverted heathen and false Christians and shall gather them into a countless army and lead them against the Christian Church—this is true; but not in the antiscriptural and nonsensical sense in which the millennialists take it. Neither are the "thousand years" to be reckoned according to the calendar, they simply denote a long period of time. Nor must we think of a mere external conflict and assault by the wicked masses, but rather of a conflict and assault carried on with all the intellectual weapons that Satan and human ingenuity, in the service of Satan, can devise. We pass over in silence the antiscriptural nonsense that a bodily assault shall be made upon the City of Jerusalem in particular and upon the risen Apostles and martyrs, yea, and mayhap upon Christ Himself, who, according to millennialists, will dwell visibly upon earth. Nor is this conflict and assault—correctly understood—to be looked for in the future, but the Church of Jesus Christ is undergoing it now.

7. That hereupon the last day will dawn, with the coming of Christ, with the fire that will consume the hostile forces, with the final Judgment, with the general resurrection, that of the just and of the wicked, and with the execution of judgment upon the latter—this also is true; but not in the antiscriptural sense in which the millennialists take it. For this coming of Christ will not be a "second" coming (returning) but the **one** coming of which the Scriptures foretell. And the general resurrection, which will then take place, will really be a **general** resurrection and will not be preceded by a "first" resurrection. (See 3 and 5 A, B.)

If you earnestly ponder all that has been said, dear reader, you will easily see that millennialism is nothing, nothing, but an empty dream.

XXVIII. Concerning Statements of the Apostles as to the Time of Christ's Coming.

Were not the Apostles in error in what they thought and said and wrote concerning the nearness of Judgment day and of the coming of Christ?

After the Apostles had received the extraordinary gift of the Holy Ghost they were free from error also in respect to this point of the Christian faith and doctrine: they erred neither in thought, nor in word, nor in letter.

We do not say this merely because we stand **"a priori**[1] and unqualifiedly committed to the inerrancy of the Apostles and of their writings"; we purpose to "prove this statement incontestably by the writings of the Apostles themselves," as is justly demanded of us.

First, however, we wish to state two things: 1, **Before** they had received the extraordinary gift of the Holy Ghost, the Apostles were, indeed, in error both as touching other points of the Christian faith and as regards the time of the coming of the Judgment day and of the coming of Christ and the manner of his Kingdom (Acts 1: 6); 2, **even after** they had received the extraordinary gift of the Holy Ghost the Apostles did not know "the times or the seasons" of Judgment day and of Christ's coming any more than the angels of heaven (Acts 1: 7-8; Mt. 24: 36).

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[1]to begin with.

But after they had received the extraordinary gift of the Holy Ghost they neither harbored in their thoughts, nor uttered with their tongues, nor recorded with their pens, any error respecting the time of the coming of Judgment day and of the coming of Christ (or of any other features of the Christian faith).

And now it behooves us to "prove this thing incontestably by the writings of the Apostles themselves."

Observing the order in which the various books are arranged in the Bible, we shall first take up the letters of the Apostle **Paul.**

Paul wrote to the Corinthians that upon them, and the other Christians then living, "the ends of the world were come." I Cor. 10: 11. Now, according to this, it would seem, at first glance, as if Paul had expected the coming of Christ and of Judgment day to occur in his day and generation. In the same sense the following words of his are quoted: "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." I Thess. 4: 15. These words, too, would seem, at first glance, to create that impression.

But we must read on. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, to the same people to whom he had addressed the words just quoted. "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be

revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his wrath, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness and unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." II Thess. 2: 1-12. Here Paul says, and that very emphatically, that the coming of Christ and of Judgment day **would not occur until** the great Antichrist were come and his diabolical kingdom were set up **and** until he were consumed spiritually, by the Word of God. And he intimates that Antichrist could not come and set up his kingdom until the Roman world-power, as then constituted, had perished (v. 6-7). And he wrote that he had told the Thessalonians all these things when he was with them (v. 5). And respecting his own life and death he wrote to the Philippians: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." And: "Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ; which is far better." Phil. 1: 21-23. And to Timothy he wrote: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." II Tim. 4: 6-8.

What say you now? Was Paul in error in what he thought, said, and wrote, concerning the time of Christ's coming and of Judgment day? He surely was not. He

so thought, spoke, and wrote as was right and proper in the light of subsequent events.

But, you reply, he said that upon his generation, the people then living, "the ends of the world were come." How shall we take these words? We shall tell you this later on when we shall have seen the statements of the other Apostles. . . . .

Here we merely wish to say a word about the remark of Paul's: "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." In the Greek language, in which Paul did his writing, **we** has the same meaning that **you** has in English: it refers in a general way to those who under certain given circumstances will be in such and such a position, and it is used in speaking to some one about the matter. For "we" one might substitute **they** without altering the sense.

Now let us turn to the letters of the Apostle **Peter.**

Peter writes: "The end of all things is at hand." I Pet. 4: 7. This, too, would seem to indicate, at first glance, that St. Peter expected the coming of Judgment day and of Christ to occur very soon.

But here, too, we must read on. That St. Peter did **not** expect Judgment day to come within his lifetime is evident. For he wrote: "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as my Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me." II Pet. 1: 14. And that he did not in any wise expect Judgment day to come in the near future you may see by reading the third chapter of his Second Epistle. We hope that you will read this chapter. For it is clear and plain and points to future generations (v. 3-4) and intimates that Judgment day might not come for thousands of years (v. 8-9). And so things have come to pass.

Now, was Peter in error in what he thought and spoke and wrote concerning the time of Christ's coming and of Judgment day? No more so than Paul. Peter, too,

thought, spoke, and wrote in a way which later events have shown to have been just right.

But, you again rejoin, he said—did he not?—: "The end of all things is at hand." What shall we do with this statement? Be patient a while longer.

Now we shall turn to the writings of the Apostle **John.**

John writes: "Little children, it is the last time." I John 2: 18. Here, again, it seems, at first glance, as if John had expected the coming of Judgment day and the coming of Christ to occur very soon.

But, reader! You know—do you not?—that the Apostle John received and wrote the Revelation. The substance of this revelation is given in Ch. 26 of this book. Read that and you will see that John, too, was not in error in what he thought and spoke and wrote. He, too, yea, he, above all other Apostles, thought, spoke, and wrote, and that with especial fulness and clearness, in a way which later events have shown to be the right way.

His words: "Little children, it is the last time," we shall explain farther on.

Now let us turn to **Hebrews.**

We read: "But now once in the end of the world." Hebr. 9: 26. And: "Ye see the day approaching." Ch. 10: 25. And: "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Ch. 10: 37. Here, too, it seems, at first glance, as if the author of Hebrews had expected the day of Judgment and of the coming of Christ to occur very soon.

But who was the author of Hebrews? We do not know for certain. Either it was the Apostle Paul (Ch. 10: 34a and many other things to point to him) or it was one of his companions or disciples. Very well. Then the same thing applies here that we said a few pages back with reference to Paul.

The passages just quoted we shall explain soon.

Now look at the Epistle of **James.**

We read: "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh." "Behold the judge standeth before the door." Ch. 5: 8-9.

This is all James has.

And now for the Epistle of **Jude.**

Jude speaks of "the last time" as belonging to a later period: he refers to what the Apostles Paul and Peter said about it. (I Tim. 4: 1ff and II Pet. 3.) v. 17-18.

Now we shall explain those statements of the Apostles which, at first glance, seem to indicate that the Apostles imagined Judgment day and the coming of Christ to be very near at hand.

To facilitate matters we shall arrange these utterances according to the expressions therein used.

Paul says that upon his generation "the ends[1] of the world are to come." I Cor. 10: 11. The author of Hebrews says: "But now once in the end of the world."[2] Ch. 9: 26. John says: "Little children, it is the last time."[3] I John 2: 18. These three statements merely declare that with the appearing of Christ and the completion of His work of redemption **the last period of the divine economy of the present world is come.**[4] The present world comprises two great periods of divine economy, two great "times": that of the Old Testament with its preparation and prophecy and that of the New Testament with its fulfillment. This second period, this second "time" is the last, "the ends of the world," "the last time." In these "ends of the world," in this "last time" you are living, just as the Apostles were: all things are finished that are necessary unto your salvation, you need wait for nothing but the eternal consummation, which the last day, with the coming of Christ, will usher in. These statements then give you no trouble.

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[1] *τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων.* [2] *ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰώνων.*

[3] *ἐσχάτη ὥρα.* [4] See *πάλαι* and *ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων.* Hebr. 1, 1. 2.

Put Peter says: "The end of all things is at hand."[5] I Pet. 4: 7. And the author of Hebrews says: "Ye see the day approaching."[6] 10: 25. And James: "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh."[7] "Behold, the judge standeth before the door." 5: 8-9. How shall we explain these sayings?

Thus:

Since "the ends of the world" and "the last time" are come, as we have seen, we are to wait for nothing now but the end of **all things:** the last day and the coming of the Lord unto Judgment. This will occur "in the last time,"[8] according to "the words which were spoken before of the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ."[9] Jude 18: 17. And this last time will also come after "the words" have been fulfilled, "which were spoken before the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ," namely, the prophecies of Paul, II Thess. 2: 1-12, and of Peter, II Pet. 3, and of John in the Revelation.

Yes, but how was that **"at hand,"**[5] how was that **"approaching,"**[6] **drawing night,"**[7] and **"before the door,"** already in the Apostles' day? How is this to be understood?

In this manner: All things that the last time and the end of all things and the last day and the coming of Christ unto Judgment were to usher in, were now **approaching,** were now **a-coming.** Thus the Greek text reads and so does the English translation. All things were tending in that direction already in the days of the Apostles. II Thess. 2: 7.

"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-

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[5] *πάντων δε τέλος ἤγγικεν* [6] *ἐγγίζουσαν.* [7] *ἤγγικεν.*
[8] *ἐπ' ἐσχάτου χρόνου.* [9] *ἐν ὑστέροις καιροῖς* (I Tim. 4, 1), *ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν* (2. Pet. 3, 3).

suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." II. Pet. 3: 8-10.

Adn this day is exceedingly near to **every individual** and the Judge stands before every man's door. For death is exceedingly near to every individual and stands before every man's door. And in death there is no duration of time as there is on earth. Death spirits every one through the ages that are on earth as in a single moment and places them in the very midst of the end of all things.

No, the Apostles were **not** "in error in what they thought ,spoke, and wrote, concerning the nearness of the last day and of the coming of Christ." This is proven inconstestably by their own writings.

XXIX. Concerning Translations of the Bible.

How ought we to regard translations of the Bible?

There are good translations and bad translations. It behooves the Church of Jesus Christ to prove the best of translations by the original Greek and Hebrew texts.

The Bible was written by inspiration of the Holy Ghost in the Greek and Hebrew tongues, the Old Testament in Hebrew, the New Testamnt in Greek.

In the course of time, especially in more recent times, the Bible has been translated into the tongues of the various nations.

No translator ever possessed the gift of the Holy Ghost in such manner as did the original authors, the holy Prophets and Apostles. Of no translation, therefore, can it be said that its every word was inspired by the Holy Ghost in such manner as were the original Greek and Hebrew texts.

Thank God, there are **good** translations. The best translation there is is the German one by Dr. Martin Luther. Dr. Martin Luther was eminently qualified for this work, God having furnished him with the necessary spiritual and intellectual gifts in a most unusual degree. And he not only translated the Bible word by word, but he really did the Bible into German; he translated it in such manner that the German people are well able to grasp the meaning of the original Greek and Hebrew texts.

Also the English translation (King James Version) is a good translation. And the language is classic.

These two translations, the German and the English, have been **revised** of late, that is, they have been gone over and changed to some extent.

What about these revised editions?

Had the revisors confined their efforts to replacing certain obsolete words and expressions which are not intelligible to the German and English speaking people of to-day—had they confined their efforts to replacing these by present-day words and expressions, one could not blame them much. The utmost one could say would be that it is a doubtful undertaking to tamper with the text to which the Church has grown accustomed by long usage. But the revisors have not confined themselves to doing this. They have given some, nay, many, words and passages and altered version. In some cases there is no fault to be found with such altered version in itself, in some cases, however, there is fault to be found and very serious fault. And in every case the Christian folk are troubled and perplexed. We therefore deem it proper to warn against these revised versions of the German and English Bibles. Let us abide by the old translations, the German translation by Dr. M. Luther and the English King James Version. Then we shall not be perplexed nor led astray.

But there are **bad** translations also.

The worst one there is is the so-called Vulgate, a Latin translation prepared, for the greater part, by Jerome a Church father, who died A. D. 429. This translation was authorized by Pope Damascus and has since then been stamped and acknowledged by the Roman Catholic Church as the only correct translation. It abounds in, nay, it creeps with, gross errors and is a downright disgrace.

We may state in this connection that the Baptists have, very recently, gotten out an edition of the Bible which seeks, by means of false translations, to stamp as Scriptural the false doctrines, peculiar to their sect. The Bap-

tists spare no effort to place this book in the hands of the public. And our Christian people should beware lest they be talked into buying it.

It behooves the Church of Jesus Christ to prove every translation of the Bible by the original Greek and Hebrew texts.

To be sure! "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." I Thess. 5: 21. Thus says the Holy Ghost. And He says it with respect to spiritual things which are offered us as coming from God, as divine truth. And a translation of the Bible, surely must be classed among these things. And whereby shall such translations be proved except by the original Greek and Hebrew texts?

We say deliberately: It behooves **the Church of Jesus Christ** to prove every translation of the Bible by the original text. Ordinarily Christians, it is true, are not capable of doing this. But God has given His Church a great variety of gifts. And among them is a knowldege of languages, which some of its members possess. God wills that this knowledge of languages be used for the purpose of proving the translations of the Bible. And one linguist (person having a knowledge of languages) shall so watch the other that the Church of Jesus Christ will not be deceived and misled, yea, that not one word of the divine message shall be presented to her in a wrong translation. Verily, the Word of God is deserving of the utmost vigilance on the part of those to whom it is entrusted, lest any part of this treasure be lost.

And it behooves the Church of Jesus Christ to prove **even the very best** of translations, and that increasingly, by the original Greek and Hebrew texts. The Word of God is so sacred, and ought to be, to us, so sacred, that when it is presented to us in a translation we should, over and over and again and again, seek to ascertain whether, and to what extent, it is being presented to us unchanged; even though the translation have been prepared by a man

of God like Dr. Martin Luther and have been in common use in the Church for centuries. Paul was greater than Luther; yet the people of Berea are lauded in the Bible because they searched the Scriptures daily whether the things were so as Paul, in his preaching, declared. Acts 17: 11. Why, then, should not we be lauded if, again and again, we compare each and every translation of the Bible, even the very best, even the most extensively and highly acknowledged, yea, even the very best and greatest man's translation—if we compare such translation again and again with the original Bible text and search and seek to ascertain whether the latter is correctly rendered to us in the former. And there is no denying that in every translation of the Bible, even in the very best, there are places in which it is doubtful, at least, whether the translation be correct, yea, in which the translation is clearly inaccurate or faulty. It cannot be otherwise. God alone is perfect, offending not in a single word.

Then there is another thing to be considered.

There are places in the Bible where the original Greek or Hebrew text may be variously translated!

Does that sound strange or startling to you? Do not such things occur in every language? Take a sentence chosen from an English book and call upon some one to translate it who was not the author of it and does not know the meaning which the author intended to convey. In his celebrated poem, the Village Preacher, Oliver Goldsmith says that the preacher whom this poem has immortalized was "passing rich at forty pounds a year." This may mean that the preacher was surpassingly, or exceedingly, rich at forty pounds a year, or it may mean that he was passably or fairly rich at forty pounds a year. Now, how are you going to translate that sentence?

Now let us consider some instances in the Bible that are similar.

There is **Gen. 4: 1.** The story of Cain's birth is related here. According to Luther's translation Eve said: "I have the Man, the Lord." But according to the King James Version she said: "I have gotten a man from the Lord.." According to Luther's translation Eve meant to say that her son was the promised "seed of the woman" (Gen. 3: 15), Christ, the Lord, true God and man. And with this opinion of Luther's we are in hearty accord. But according to the English translation Eve merely said that she had gotten a male child from the Lord, or with the help of the Lord.

Whence this difference between the two translations?

In the original Hebrew text "the Lord" ("Jehovah") is preceded by the little word **et.**[1] This **et** is the well known sign of the Accustative (case of the direct object) and is equivalent to the German **den.** And thus Luther translates in here, **den Herrn,** the Lord. But **et** is also used as a preposition and is then equivalent to **with** (II Kings 6: 16). Hence one may translate Eve's word, **et Jehovah,** thus: with the Lord, that is, with the help of the Lord. And that is what the "from" of the King James Version means.

Most modern commentators reject Luther's translation and adopt that of the English Bible. They do this because they are prejudiced and think that Eve, in her day, could not have had such a clear conception of Christ. But Eve surely had a good teacher, she had Christ Himself for her teacher (I Cor. 10: 4-9), only she was mistaken with regard to the person and the time. Cain was not the Christ made flesh; He was to appear much later.

A similar instance is to be found **Job 19: 25-27a.** In Luther's translation it reads: "I know that my Redeemer liveth and He will **afterwards raise me up out of the earth; and (I) shall afterwards be surrounded with this my skin**

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[1] אֵת־יְהוָה

and in my flesh shall I see God. Him shall I see for myself and mine eyes shall behold Him, and not another." In the King James Version it reads: "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall **stand at the latter day upon** the earth: **and though after my skin worms destroy this body,** yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." Do you see the difference?

We shall not here go into the details of the original Hebrew text. We have done that in a former publication. We merely wish to say here that both translations are justified by the original Hebrew text. Recall to mind our quotation from the Village Preacher: . . . **"passing** rich at forty pounds a year." Both translations give expression to the hope of a future resurrection.

We do wish, however, to take brief notice of an impudent fraud to be found in the German Revised Edition and in the English Standard Edition, also revised. The closing words of verse 26 are translated in both of these editions: **"Without** my flesh shall I see God."

What both of these editions render: **"without** my flesh," reads in the original Hebrew text: **mibessari.**[2] **Mi** is a preposition. This preposition has various meanings which are barred from consideration in our text. The only meaning that can claim consideration in our text is the one the word commonly has, that of **from,** namely, forth from a certain place or thing, away from, etc. And only by referring to the connection in which this **mi** or **from** is used are we enabled to determine its exact meaning.

Mi really may mean **without** and it sometimes does mean **without** in the Bible. For instance, Job 11: 15a: "For then shalt thou lift up thy face **without (mi)** spot," that is, **away from, free from,** spot (blame).[3]

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[2] מִבְּשָׂרִי [3] מִמּוּם

But now take Isa. 40: 15: "As a drop of **(mi)** a bucket,"[4] that is, a drop **clinging to** a bucket, after the water has been poured out, and, therefore, remaining **in** the bucket. Here **mi** surely cannot mean **without.** 'Twere nonsense to so interpret it. In like manner we read in Solomon's Song, Ch. 5: 4: "My beloved put in his hand by **(mi)** the hole of the door."[5] Here the Beloved is represented as rapping at the door and, the door not being opened at once, as putting His hand into the room by the hole of the door, so that His hand, or arm, extends **from** the hole of the door into the room. Now, this He surely could not do **without** the hole of the door. It were downright folly to suppose that **mi** here means **without.**

And now to our text from the Book of Job. Job, in his awful misery, is on the verge of despair. But he plucks up courage. He remembers His Redeemer who afterwards[6] finally, at the last, at the later day, as "the last One," will redeem, or liberate, him also from death. And, says Job, I "shall see God." How see God? **"Without** my flesh"? Oh, no! **"In** my flesh," **from, from out of,** my flesh, which has been raised up out of the earth.

By translating **"without** my flesh" the revisors would indicate that Job meant to say that his **soul,** when liberated from his miserable body, would see God. They think that Job could not have known anything whatever about the resurrection. And so they translate "without my flesh," although they know very well that they not only could just as well have translated **"in** my flsh," but that the context **compels** us to so translate.

We wish to make a statement here. That the **soul sees** God **without the body** is not stated in the Bible anywhere. If any one doubts this statement, let him show us a place in the Bible where it says the soul sees God without the body. But as for the resurrection, the Bible is simply

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4 מִדְּלִי 5 מִן־הַחֹר 6 אַחֲרוֹן

full of it. Also the Old Testament teaches the resurrection from the dead. Read what the Lord Jesus says abou this thing Mark 12: 24-27. And read what it says Isa. 26: 19 and Ezek. 37: 3-6 and Dan. 12: 2, 13.

Wretched revisors of the translations of the Bible!

To show that in some places the original text of the Bible may be variously translated, we shall point out one more instance in the New Testament.

Rom. 3: 23-26 reads in Luther's translation: "For there is here no difference; all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely, by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in His blood, **to offer the righteousness that avails in His sight, in remitting sins that hitherto had remained under the forbearance of God; to offer at this time the righteousness that avails in His sight;** that He alone might be just and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." But in the King James Version the passage reads: "For there is no difference (v. 22b): for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, **to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness:** that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." You observe the main points of difference, which occur v. 25 and 26. According to Luther's translation, God set Christ forth, **to offer to us the righteousness that avails in His sight,** which consists in the remission of all sin, in the righteousness of faith. According to the English Version, God set Christ forth, to **declare His** (God's) **own righteousness** in remitting all sin. The meaning of this translation is: In punishing Christ for the sins of the world and having Him atone

for them, God has declared and shown that His justice remains unimpaired and in full force, when He forgives all sins and justifies men by faith in Christ.

The German Revised Version retains Luther's translation of this passage. Nearly all prominent expositors of the present day side with the English translation. We, for our humble part, do likewise. Both translations are in keeping with the faith.

There are a good many other places in the Bible in which the German translation of Dr. Luther differs from that of the English Bible and in which an orthodox and thoroughly faithful theologian feels constrained to translate in a way differing from Dr. Luther's. We trust you will not let that trouble nor perplex you. The teachings of Holy Writ are not affected thereby in the least.

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